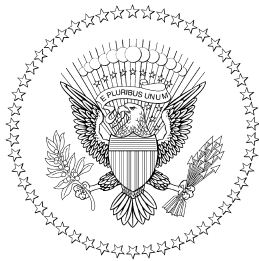


Weekly Compilation of
**Presidential
Documents**



Monday, September 4, 2006
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Contents

Addresses and Remarks

- Arkansas, Cotham's in the City in Little Rock—1530
- Louisiana
 - Gulf Coast School Library Recovery Initiative, discussion in New Orleans—1520
 - Hurricane Katrina recovery efforts in New Orleans—1520
- Mississippi
 - Hurricane Katrina recovery efforts in Biloxi—1513
 - Lunch meeting with community leaders in Biloxi—1513
 - United States Marine, Inc., in Gulfport—1518
- Radio address—1512
- Tennessee, dinner for senatorial candidate Bob Corker and the Tennessee Republican Party in Nashville—1531
- Utah
 - American Legion national convention in Salt Lake City—1537
 - Arrival in Salt Lake City—1536
 - Reception for senatorial candidate Orrin Hatch in Salt Lake City—1544
- War on terror—1536

Executive Orders

- Improving Assistance for Disaster Victims—1527

Interviews With the News Media

- Exchanges with reporters
 - Gulfport, MS—1518
 - Little Rock, AR—1530

Letters and Messages

- Labor Day, message—1549

Proclamations

- National Day of Remembrance of Hurricane Katrina—1511
- National Ovarian Cancer Awareness Month—1528
- National Prostate Cancer Awareness Month—1529

Supplementary Materials

- Acts approved by the President—1552
- Checklist of White House press releases—1551
- Digest of other White House announcements—1549
- Nominations submitted to the Senate—1551

Editor's Note: The President was at Camp David, MD, on September 1, the closing date of this issue. Releases and announcements issued by the Office of the Press Secretary but not received in time for inclusion in this issue will be printed next week.

WEEKLY COMPILATION OF

PRESIDENTIAL DOCUMENTS

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Week Ending Friday, September 1, 2006

Proclamation 8043—National Day of Remembrance of Hurricane Katrina, 2006

August 25, 2006

By the President of the United States of America

A Proclamation

One year ago, a vast coastline of towns and communities was virtually destroyed; one of America's great cities was submerged; and many lives were lost in one of the worst natural disasters in our Nation's history. On this National Day of Remembrance of Hurricane Katrina, we honor those who did not survive the fury of the storm and those who continue to put their lives back together in its aftermath. We also remember the heroism of ordinary citizens who touched our hearts with their bravery and compassion and moved our whole Nation to action.

Hurricane Katrina brought many days of struggle and sorrow; yet, we also witnessed extraordinary acts of courage and kindness. Rescue workers, other first responders, and concerned citizens from around the country risked their lives to save others and performed heroically under the most difficult of circumstances. Many were victims themselves, acting on a sense of duty greater than their own suffering. Men, women, and children across America rallied to help their neighbors in desperate need, providing food, water, shelter, and hope to the victims of Hurricane Katrina. Those days tested our Nation, and they revealed a resilience more powerful than any storm.

Millions of lives were changed in a day by that cruel and destructive storm. America accepted the challenge to restore broken communities and disrupted lives not as a burden, but as our responsibility to help our fellow citizens. Victims and volunteers continue to demonstrate a spirit that cannot be broken—a core of strength that survives all hurt, a

faith in God that no storm can take away, and an unyielding determination to clear the wreckage and build anew.

In the past year, Federal, State, and local governments have worked to enhance our Nation's ability to prepare for and respond to natural disasters. The Federal Government has conducted an extensive review of preparedness and response efforts, and actions are being taken at every level to improve communications and coordination and strengthen emergency response capabilities. The American people can know that our government is working hard to be prepared to protect life and property should we face another such challenge.

In the life of our Nation, we have often been reminded that nature is an awesome force, and that all life is fragile. However, Americans have always summoned the will and compassion to persevere and rebuild. Guided by our enduring American spirit, we know that a bright new dawn will rise over the great city of New Orleans, and the entire Gulf Coast region will reemerge stronger and more vibrant than ever.

Now, Therefore, I, George W. Bush, President of the United States of America, by virtue of the authority vested in me by the Constitution and laws of the United States, do hereby proclaim August 29, 2006, as a National Day of Remembrance of Hurricane Katrina. I call upon State and local governments, places of worship, and all Americans to mark this day with services and appropriate observances. I also encourage all Americans to remember and support the continued effort to rebuild our Nation's great Gulf Coast.

In Witness Whereof, I have hereunto set my hand this twenty-fifth day of August, in the year of our Lord two thousand six, and of the Independence of the United States of America the two hundred and thirty-first.

George W. Bush

[Filed with the Office of the Federal Register, 9:10 a.m., August 29, 2006]

NOTE: This proclamation was published in the *Federal Register* on August 30. This item was not received in time for publication in the appropriate issue.

The President's Radio Address

August 26, 2006

Good morning. Earlier this week, I had coffee with Rocky Vaccarella in the White House. Rocky is from St. Bernard Parish in Louisiana, and he and his family lost everything they owned to Hurricane Katrina. Rocky drove to Washington to thank the Federal Government for its efforts to help people like him, and he brought a trailer along to help remind us that many good people along our gulf coast are still living in difficult conditions and that the hard work of rebuilding has only just begun.

This Tuesday marks the first anniversary of Katrina—one of the deadliest and most costly natural disasters in American history. In Mississippi, the storm wiped out virtually everything along an 80-mile stretch of the coast, flattening homes and destroying entire communities. In Louisiana, flooding left 80 percent of the city of New Orleans underwater. The human costs were even more terrible. More than a thousand people died, countless families lost their homes and livelihoods, and tens of thousands of men, women, and children were forced to flee the region and leave behind everything they knew.

During the storm and in the days that followed, Americans responded with heroism and compassion. Coast Guard and other personnel rescued people stranded in flooded neighborhoods and brought them to high ground. Doctors and nurses stayed behind to care for their patients, and some even went without food so their patients could eat. Many of the first-responders risking their lives to help others were victims themselves—wounded healers, with a sense of duty greater than their own suffering. And across our great land, the armies of compassion rallied to bring food and water and hope to fellow citizens who had lost everything.

In these and countless other selfless acts, we saw the spirit of America at its best.

Unfortunately, Katrina also revealed that Federal, State, and local governments were unprepared to respond to such an extraordinary disaster. And the floodwaters exposed a deep-seated poverty that has cut people off from the opportunities of our country. So last year, I made a simple pledge: The Federal Government would learn the lessons of Katrina; we would do what it takes, and we would stay as long as it takes, to help our brothers and sisters build a new gulf coast, where every citizen feels part of the great promise of America.

That was the same pledge I repeated to Rocky during his visit to the White House. This pledge meant stronger levees and rebuilt homes and new infrastructure. It also means safe streets and neighborhoods filled with locally-owned businesses and more opportunities for everyone.

Next week, Laura and I will return to Mississippi and New Orleans to meet with local citizens and officials, and review the progress we have made. The Federal Government has conducted a thorough review of its response to natural disasters, and we're making reforms that will improve our response to future emergencies. With help from Congress, we have committed \$110 billion to the recovery effort, and we are playing a vital role in helping people clear debris, repair and rebuild their homes, reopen their businesses and schools, and put their lives back together.

The Federal Government will continue to do its part. Yet a reborn gulf coast must reflect the needs, the vision, and the aspirations of the people of Mississippi and Louisiana. And their State and local officials have a responsibility to help set priorities and make tough decisions, so people can plan their futures with confidence.

One year after the storms, the gulf coast continues down the long road to recovery. In Mississippi and Louisiana, we can see many encouraging signs of recovery and renewal, and many reminders that hard work still lies ahead. This work will require the sustained commitment of our Government,

the generosity and compassion of the American people, and the talent and vision of people determined to restore their homes, neighborhoods, and cities. We will stay until the job is done, and by working together, we will help our fellow citizens along the gulf coast write a new future of hope, justice, and opportunity for all.

Thank you for listening.

NOTE: The address was recorded at 9:25 a.m. on August 24 in the Cabinet Room at the White House for broadcast at 10:06 a.m. on August 26. The transcript was made available by the Office of the Press Secretary on August 25 but was embargoed for release until the broadcast. The Office of the Press Secretary also released a Spanish language transcript of this address.

Remarks Following a Lunch Meeting With Community Leaders in Biloxi, Mississippi

August 28, 2006

Laura and I are pleased to be down here again, and we want to thank the community leaders from the gulf coast region of Mississippi for sharing their thoughts and their concerns and their hopes and their aspirations.

I was just commenting on how clean the beaches look, and that wasn't a given a year ago. The beaches were cluttered with debris and garbage—the beautiful beaches here had been destroyed. And now they speak to the hope of this part of the world.

There's still a lot of problems left, but the people down here need to know the Federal Government is committed to working with you and the local people, and that, even though we've been through about one year together, one year doesn't mean that we'll forget. As a matter of fact, now is the time to renew our commitment to let the people down here know that we will stay involved and help the people of Mississippi rebuild their lives.

The truth of the matter is, the ultimate future for this region down here depends on the people of Mississippi. It requires the spirit and the courage of the people of this part of the world to rebuild and I'm confident that's going to be the case.

We saw that spirit right after the storm hit, and we still see that spirit. And so I want to thank the good folks for letting us come by and say hello. We value our friends down here, and we really appreciate the good people of the gulf coast of Mississippi for what you stand for.

Governor, thank you; appreciate you.

NOTE: The President spoke at 12:39 p.m. in the Biloxi Schooner Restaurant. In his remarks, he referred to Gov. Haley Barbour of Mississippi. A tape was not available for verification of the content of these remarks.

Remarks on Hurricane Katrina Recovery Efforts in Biloxi

August 28, 2006

The President. Listen, thank you all for coming. I'm glad to be back here in Biloxi, and I'm glad Laura came with me. I've been in this neighborhood before. As a matter of fact, I was here a couple of days after Katrina hit. It's amazing, isn't it? It's amazing what the world looked like then and what it looks like now.

I remember meeting Patrick Wright. Remember, Patrick? I don't know if you all remember the picture of me seeing this fellow sitting in what used to be his home, a pile of rubble. Patrick, it's good to see you.

I also met Sandy and Lynn Patterson when I was walking down the street, your neighbor. They—well, just about everybody here, they'd lost everything they owned. People can't imagine what the world looked like then. I went by their home—just came out of their home. It's got air-conditioning—[laughter]—and electricity. You can see the reconstruction effort beginning here in this part of the world.

It's a sense of renewal here. It may be hard for those of you who have endured the last year to really have that sense of change, but for a fellow who was here and now a year later comes back, things are changing. And I congratulate you for your courage and your perseverance.

And there's still challenges. There's still more to be done. You can see it with the temporary trailers. I feel the quiet sense of

determination that's going to shape the future of Mississippi. And so I've come back on this anniversary to thank you for your courage and to let you know, the Federal Government stands with you still. Laura and I really care for the people whose lives have been affected. We understand the trauma, and we thank you for your determination.

I want to thank Governor Haley Barbour and Marsha for joining us today. I appreciate the Federal coordinator of gulf coast rebuilding, Don Powell. He's my friend from Texas. We've got two of the military who helped after the storm. I think they made an enormous difference in people's lives—General Russ Honore and Admiral Thad Allen. Thank you for joining us. You've got two fine United States Senators from Mississippi, Thad Cochran and Trent Lott. And I thank Tricia for joining us as well. I want to thank Congressman Chip Pickering who has joined us today. Congressman Pickering, like these two Senators, care a lot about the people of Mississippi.

I remember walking the block here with A.J. Holloway, your mayor. He—A.J. obviously was upset and concerned, but he also made it clear to me that with the proper amount of help, Biloxi can rebuild. And Biloxi is rebuilding. You got a fine mayor in A.J. Holloway.

I've had the pleasure of meeting some of the local officials up and down the coast—matter of fact, probably all of the local officials. One of the people that has intrigued me the most is Mayor Tommy Longo of Waveland. Mayor, good to see you, buddy. Thanks for coming. I'm always asking about you, Tommy.

Mayor Tommy Longo. I'm always asking about you.

The President. That's right. [*Laughter*] Check is in the mail. [*Laughter*]

You know, one of the interesting people I met was Malcolm Jones—he's a city attorney of Pass Christian. Malcolm, thanks for coming. He helped design the plan that enabled us to expedite the debris removal, and I appreciate your contribution. I want to thank Chipper McDermott, who is the mayor, with us—he's Pass Christian's mayor. Rusty Quave is with us today. Mr. Mayor, thanks for coming. Billy Skellie is with us as

well. These are all mayors trying to help their communities recover, doing the hard work to helping the people improve their lives. I want to thank my friend, Brent Warr. He's the mayor of Gulfport. Brent, good to see you. Thanks for coming. I want to thank the Biloxi firefighters who have joined us today. Thank you for your work. Thank you for staying the job.

When Katrina made landfall on August 29th at 6:10, it was one of the strongest hurricanes to ever hit America. The devastation and debris were unimaginable. You had to see it for yourself to fully understand the nature of this storm and the damage done. The terrible force of the storms tossed some of the giant casinos here onto the land. They twisted traffic lights. They ripped some of the beautiful trees from the ground. They stripped the cities of familiar landmarks and buildings.

In the days that followed, the people of Mississippi worked together to save lives. People reached out to those who were trapped by rising waters. Three people were pulled through a window in that house right there, to save their lives. People opened their homes to help the suffering. The people of Mississippi said, "We'll overcome this disaster," and worked together to do so.

Since the days of heroism and bravery, the gulf coast has begun one of the largest rebuilding efforts in our Nation's history. This is my 11th visit since the storm hit. You know, each visit you see progress. I was struck by the beauty of the beaches. The beaches were pretty rough after the storm, as you know. Today, they're pristine, and they're beautiful. They reflect a hopeful future, as far as I'm concerned.

I appreciate the fact that the people down here have embraced this amazing challenge with determination and grit. And your Governor is leading the way. He says this: He says, "With all its destruction, the storm gave birth to a renaissance in Mississippi that will surely result in building our State bigger and better than ever before." He believes that. A lot of the people in Mississippi believe that. And so do I.

A year ago, I committed our Federal Government to help you. I said, we have a duty to help the local people recover and rebuild.

And I meant what I said. Working with Thad and Trent Lott and other Members of the United States Congress, we have appropriated \$110 billion to help rebuild this area. It is a strong Federal commitment that we will keep.

We understand people are still anxious to get in their home. We understand people hear about help and wonder where it is. We know that. But the first thing is, is that this Federal Government has made a commitment to help, and it starts with a large check. It also means that in order for the rebuilding to be as strong as we want, there has to be a partnership with the Federal Government and the State and local governments.

Here's my attitude about the partnership: You know better than the people in Washington the needs of your communities. I'd rather listen to local mayors and county commissioners than folks sitting in Washington, DC, about what this part of Mississippi wants.

The first test of this partnership was to clear debris. You can't rebuild a community when the community is full of debris. We've now removed about 98 percent of the dry debris. I remember when we first came down here; the mayors weren't so happy with the debris removal. But we listened to them. We got the funding equations right. And we got after it, and the debris is basically gone—which is step one of making sure our partnership works, and step two about making sure we can rebuild this area bigger and better than before.

We're also working together to make sure we're better prepared to handle the hurricanes. Every Department of my administration participated in a comprehensive study that looked at our response to last year's hurricanes. Each Department came up with practical reforms, ways to do things better. And so we've been reviewing plans. We've been working with the State and local folks.

The people in Mississippi are prepared. And I want to thank Governor Barbour and the local folks for making impressive efforts to protect the people of Mississippi. The truth of the matter is, we can work together, and will, but when disaster strikes, the first people that you rely upon—the people that matter most—are your friends. It's friends

helping friends that turns out to make an enormous difference in saving lives and helping to get by the trauma of the first days.

We all have roles to play, but in every State hit by last year's storms, it was the bravery of the local citizens that meant the difference between life and death. It was the bravery of the first-responders on the scenes. I'm here to thank you all for showing the country how to respond to natural disaster.

See, there's a new Mississippi that's coming, and you're going to see it in the construction of homes and the return of local businesses. This requires a different kind of courage, but it's a courage, nevertheless, for people to take risk and to rebuild and to say, "I'm not going to let the storm disrupt my life forever."

See, you got people here leading the reconstruction. We'll help you. We've committed more than \$3 billion in housing grants, and that money is beginning to flow to the homeowners. And I know there's some frustration, but I want to appreciate the State working hard to make sure that when that money is spent, it's spent well and it goes to people who deserve it. That's what you expect, and that's what's going to happen. The checks have begun to roll; they're beginning to move, and the Governor and his staff are on top of it. It's a huge undertaking that's going to require cooperation with government agencies, insurance companies, volunteers, and community leaders.

The folks right back here said they couldn't have rebuilt this house without the church, without volunteer organizations that have stepped up to help. Governor Barbour's Commission on Recovery, Rebuilding, and Renewal was an important step to bringing citizens together to develop a vision of how people can work together. It's a smart thing to have done.

See, I said, you develop the plan. We're not going to do it for you because you know better the local needs, and Mississippi stepped up. The Commission brought together more than 500 volunteers. The Commission held more than 50 public forums in 33 counties. They heard from thousands of citizens on how to rebuild, and as a result,

the recovery efforts began with concrete recommendations on how to improve the infrastructure, on how to revamp zoning laws and building codes, and how to increase local cooperation in planning for future storms.

It was a smart thing to do, Governor, and I appreciate you doing it. You have a strategy now to build smarter homes. You've got a strategy to have neighborhoods connected by parks and playgrounds. You've got a sound strategy.

And I understand that rebuilding neighborhoods begins one house at a time, and that's what's happening here. When somebody goes back to their home, it helps renew the community, and so part of our efforts and part of our focus is to make sure that people can get back in their homes as quickly as possible.

Sandy Patterson—she can tell you how important it is to feel reconnected. She says, "My house is my home again, and it's good to be home." And that's what we want; people to help people here in this part of the world.

Listen, the spirit is alive here in the small-business owners who are working hard to get their businesses open. One of the entrepreneurs, a fellow named Ernest Henley—he's here. He owns West End Cleaners. When Katrina hit, it blew out his windows, hurt his roof. Less than 2 weeks later, the windows were boarded up, but West End Cleaners was back in business. See, he wasn't going to let the storm stop him from realizing his dream, which is running his own business.

Bobby Mahoney is with us. He showed the same spirit when he opened Mary Mahoney's. That's a restaurant he named for his mother. That's a smart thing to do if you have a restaurant. *[Laughter]* Within 2 months of Hurricane Katrina, Mary Mahoney's was once again serving its world-famous gourmet seafood gumbo. Inside the restaurant you can see where Bobby painted the lines to mark how high the waters were for Camille and then Katrina. He says this: "The reason why Biloxi is going to get back real quick is because of businesses. You can come back and build a home with a job, but you can't come back and build a home without a job."

That's a smart man who understands that as this part of the world flourishes and businesses grow, people are going to find work and have the wherewithal to help rebuild the communities in their lives.

I appreciate the spirit of Pass Christian. After the hurricanes leveled many of its buildings, the city responded by permitting businesses and community organizations to set up trailers in War Memorial Park. The idea started when Hancock Bank set up a shop in an RV. Today, the park has two banks, an insurance agent, a real estate business, a convenience store, a construction company, a takeout restaurant, and a town library. Scott Naugle—he's with us today; he's the president of the chamber. He says, "We're going to do business even if we have to learn new ways to do it."

Optimism is the only option. We want to help. We want to help that optimism succeed. And so I signed legislation that creates what's called the Gulf Opportunity Zones. That means if you invest in this part of the world, you get tax breaks. In other words, they're using the Tax Code to say, come and invest your capital here. It's very important for the Congress to extend this legislation. It's important for planners and job creators to know that the incentive we created will still be there.

And also, we've put out small-business loans. In other words, what we're trying to do is just help you. The spirit is here. The people want to succeed. And our job at the Federal level is to help you succeed. That's what I've come to tell you.

One of the remarkable things about this part of the world that was so affected by the storms was what happened to the schools. Laura has visited the gulf coast 13 times. She's carried the message that a lot of people in America feel, and that is, it's important to help children get back to school as quickly as possible. And you've done that.

For children who lost everything—their homes, their belongings, and their friends—going to school can be a place where they find stability and a familiar routine. The people of Mississippi understood that well. Teachers and community leaders worked hard to get the children back into school as quickly as possible.

Catch this: As a result of these efforts, in the past school year, every district closed after Katrina was reopened. It's a remarkable accomplishment by the good folks in this part of the world. Lizana Elementary School is a good example. In the days and weeks after Katrina, it first served as a Red Cross shelter. And to get school back on its feet, the citizens from Mississippi and all across the Nation helped it rebuild. They donated desks and file cabinets and even clothing and bookbags and pencils and paper. Vickie Williams is with us today. Here's what she said. She said, "None of the students had to purchase supplies. Through donation efforts across the country, everything got back to normal. It was a blessing from everywhere." Vickie, thanks for giving other people credit, but you and your staff deserve a lot of credit.

Charles B. Murphy and Gulfview elementary schools are another inspiring story. When the schools were destroyed, the teachers had to adapt, and they began to hold their classes in trailers. Teachers helped with maintenance duties, and parents pitched in, and volunteers came as far away as Vermont and Canada. And they assembled furniture and hauled boxes and set up computers and planted trees. There was an outdoor classroom that served as a meeting place for science and music and physical education.

Jan White is with us. She said this: "Last year was survival; this year is innovation." The school system has not only survived, but they're going to be stronger and better than they were before.

One of the things that the Governor and the Senator said to the Federal Government, they said, "We need help. Our tax bases have been destroyed. We need operating cash to keep our schools running." And so we've spent almost \$480 million to help the schools recover. But there's a lot more work to be done.

And one of the places where work can be done and is being done is in libraries. Laura Bush feels strongly about this. She's set up what's called the Laura Bush Foundation, and in working with the private sector, has awarded more than a million dollars in grants to 20 schools to purchase new books.

We see the new Mississippi because of the faith-based and community organizations

that abound here. When the hurricane struck, men and women of faith stepped forward immediately. The following Sunday, Father Harold Roberts—he's with us today—and the congregation of Episcopal Church of the Redeemer gathered at the site where their church once stood. They carried lawn chairs, and they brought blankets to sit. Some of them had been through this before.

See, back in 1969, Hurricane Camille destroyed everything but the steeple and the old church bell. This time, nothing was left standing, and so the congregation had to ring the old bell from its new place in the rubble. On that first Sunday after Katrina, Father Harold Roberts read from the Book of Romans. Here's what he said. He said, "Rejoice in hope. Be patient in suffering. Persevere in prayer"—precisely what the people of this part of the world have done.

Father Roberts is working hard. His congregation began to rebuild their school, and now they're building—they're going to build a church on higher ground. In the meantime, they're gathering in the gymnasium. He said, "In spite of the challenges of the past year, we see the power of God working. The people have been incredibly patient. We will recover from this, and we will not rebuild until we can do it right."

Good citizens have risen up all over Mississippi to rebuild this State. Many volunteers traveled thousands of miles to be here. In other words, I hope you realized you weren't alone. One of the amazing groups was Hands On Gulf Coast.

Hands On Gulf Coast is a group of volunteers, total strangers to the people of this part of the world, in large part. They said, "What can I do to help?" They came en masse. They did all kinds of things. They cleaned up wreckage, and they removed mold, and they repaired roofs, and they provided clothing, and they tutored students. Somebody said, "We have a need." They said, "I want to help."

When the Coastal Family Health Center lost three buildings and more than 60 staff members, Hands On offered to help. They worked with nurses who came from the gulf coast. They got FedEx to supply funding for airfare. They provided food and housing. And as a result, the Coastal Family Health Center

was able to provide critical help for good people in this part of the world.

Suzanne Stahl, who I happen to have met, is standing right over there. You've been down here for 12 months, see. Isn't that amazing? Somebody shows up and says, "I want to help," and is still here helping because she cares, as do a lot of other people. She said this: "It's been incredible to see the power and will of all the volunteers who have come to do something. If only I could have bottled the energy and enthusiasm of these volunteers. It's just about as unbelievable as the devastation."

So, I want to thank all those who have volunteered. I want to thank those who have given of their hard-earned money to help the good people down here recover. I want to remind those who are constantly looking for a way to serve your fellow man that there's still work to be done down here, that there's still hope. There's still a need for people to come and help.

The armies of compassion that conducted the millions of acts of kindness remind us that the true strength of the United States of America lies in the hearts and souls of our citizens, and we're thankful for that.

No doubt in my mind, Mississippi will have the renaissance that Governor Barbour talked about. You can't drive through this State without seeing signs of recovery and renewal. It's just impossible to miss the signs of hope. And you've done it the old-fashioned way, with vision and hard work and resolve.

Some of the hardest work is still ahead. We'll complete the clearing of the wet debris from the Mississippi Sound. We'll ensure Federal money reaches the individuals who need it to build their homes. We'll make sure the schools and libraries are rebuilt better than before, and we'll stand by you as long as it takes to get the job done. And when the job gets done, your children and your grandchildren will have a brighter and more hopeful future.

May God continue to bless the courageous people of Mississippi. Thank you for coming.

NOTE: The President spoke at 2:10 p.m. in an East Biloxi neighborhood. In his remarks, he referred to Gov. Haley Barbour of Mississippi and his wife, Marsha; Lt. Gen. Russel L. Honore, USA, commanding general, First United States

Army; Patricia Thompson Lott, wife of Senator C. Trent Lott; Mayor A.J. Holloway of Biloxi, MS; Mayor Rusty Quave of D'Iberville, MS; Mayor Billy Skellie, Jr., of Long Beach, MS; Vickie Williams, principal, Lizana Elementary School; and Jan White, principal, Gulfview-Charles B. Murphy Elementary School.

Remarks Following a Tour of United States Marine, Inc., and an Exchange With Reporters in Gulfport, Mississippi

August 28, 2006

The President. One of the things I've learned here is that the good folks at United States Marine are looking for workers, and there's a shortage of workers here in the gulf coast. The reason I bring that up is that if people are looking for work, they should come.

Obviously, part of the problem is getting housing. That's why we're working with Governor Barbour to make sure that the housing money starts moving. But people are going to have to—they're coming down to work; they're going to have to have a place to live. But what's fascinating about this part of the world is that in one year's time, it's gone from despair to hope and that if you're somebody who wants to find a job, you can find work in Mississippi, good-paying jobs. That's what the man just told me who runs the company. There is hope down here. There's still a lot of work to be done.

My message to the people down here is that we understand there's more work to be done, and just because a year has passed—the Federal Government will remember the people. This is an anniversary, but it doesn't mean it ends. It's the beginning of what is going to be a long recovery. But I'm amazed by the opportunity; I'm amazed by the hope that I feel down here. Anyway, thought you would be interested.

Federal Government Role in Hurricane Recovery Efforts

Q. Mr. President, a few minutes ago, in your remarks a few minutes ago, you talked about the role of faith-based organizations. Has the experience down here given you a

new opinion about what the role of the Federal Government can or should be in a situation like this?

The President. The role of Government here, first and foremost, is to provide enough money to say that the rebuilding effort will be robust. I felt it was very important for us to be generous, and the people of America responded. The people in the gulf coast region have got to understand, the American taxpayers have stepped forth with a lot of money. And you can't have hope unless there's a reason to be hopeful, and the \$110 billion was a reason to be hopeful.

Obviously, there's a lot of work to be done, but the Federal Government had a very important role to play and we're playing it, but so does the State and local government, whether it be here in Mississippi or in Louisiana. The citizens of our country and the citizens of this region have an important role to play, because this storm was so big it requires all aspects of American life to help the people. It was a massive storm. It was the largest in the Nation's history or at least the most expensive.

Rebuilding Efforts on the Gulf Coast/Jobs

Q. How long do you imagine it will be before this area is fully rebuilt?

The President. Well, it's hard for me to say. I would say years, not months. On the other hand, the progress in one year's time has been remarkable. And I suspect that what you'll see, Toby [Tabassum Zakaria, Reuters], is there will be a momentum; momentum will be gathered. Houses will be built; jobs will be created. And they're just beginning to get to that point where the infrastructures are being expanded, the houses are going to be—more houses are going to be added.

The Governor was talking to me today about an interesting modular concept to expedite people getting out of trailers into something more permanent. But the storm was massive in scope. You came down with me and saw it. But most Americans didn't get to see what it was like. It's hard to describe the devastation down here. It was massive in its destruction, and it spared nobody. United States Senator Trent Lott had a fantastic house overlooking the bay. I know be-

cause I sat in it with he and his wife. And now it's completely obliterated. There's nothing. And I remember coming down here—these giant piles of debris were here.

People say, "How can we rebuild with debris?" Now it's gone. But to answer your question, I can't predict, but I do know how massive the effort is going to be, and I know how massive it's been. There's just more work to be done. The people down here need to know the Federal Government is helping, and we understand that there are still issues, and people are still hurting, and people want to get into their homes.

Okay, final question.

Funding for Hurricane Recovery Efforts

Q. Sir, is \$110 billion the end of it? And which promises from Jackson Square are you finding hardest to make a reality?

The President. One hundred and ten billion dollars, hopefully that will work. Hopefully, that's enough. It's certainly enough to get us through the next period of time. And the hardest part has been to get a State reconstruction effort up and running. Mississippi's is up and running. Of course, I said early on that the States and local governments have got to devise a plan to rebuild. And the reason I said that is because the people of Mississippi know best how to rebuild Mississippi, and the Governor stepped up, and he put this fantastic commission together, and they developed a plan. That plan has been funded. The money is beginning to go out the door, so people can rebuild their lives.

In Louisiana, it's been a little slower. And I look forward to talking to the folks there tomorrow and this evening about what we can do to work together to expedite these plans being implemented, because we funded the housing. And I think when people begin to see the checks that come—that say, "Okay, here's some money to help you rebuild," they'll have a lot better spirit. They'll feel a lot better about their future.

Anyway, thank you all.

NOTE: The President spoke at 3:19 p.m. In his remarks, he referred to Gov. Haley Barbour of Mississippi; John Dane III, cochairman, United States Marine, Inc.; and Patricia Thompson Lott, wife of Senator C. Trent Lott. A tape was not

available for verification of the content of these remarks.

Remarks in a Discussion on the Gulf Coast School Library Recovery Initiative in New Orleans, Louisiana

August 29, 2006

The President. Laura and I want to thank the educators and students who have taken time to come over and help us make the point that renewal requires good education, and that there are a lot of good folks up and down the gulf coast who understand that, and that part of good education means having good books and strong libraries.

And so I'm going to turn it over to the person who's the strong, good library person in our family.

The First Lady. Well, I'm so excited today to get to see each one of you. I had a foundation already for school libraries, and we were just getting ready to disband the fundraising arm of that, the advisory committee, last year, last October. And when we met for our last meeting, they said, "Let's keep going; let's raise money now specifically for the gulf coast and try to raise enough money so that if every school comes up and is functional again and is staffed, that they can apply for a grant for—to stock their library."

And it's been a thrill to be associated with school people. I know how school people work. You're first-responders, just like firemen and policemen. You know you've got to get your schools up and going immediately. And I want to thank you for your determination and your very hard work, because I know that many of the people on every school staff who rebuilt their schools are also having to rebuild their own lives. They lost their own houses, or they are living in FEMA trailers. And so they're doing double work, and I want to thank you very, very much for that.

This is the second round of grants that we're announcing today—we gave 10 schools, 7 in Louisiana and 3 in Mississippi, earlier this summer. And this is our second round of grants to 10 more schools, once again 7 in Louisiana and 3 in Mississippi.

These grants, for the press, might want to know that these are for materials to restock a school library. They come in the form of a check because we know that school librarians want to build their library the way that it will support their curriculum and be most appropriate and perfect for their schoolchildren. So this is not—this is not a book distribution; this is a check to these schools so they can do what all professional librarians want to do, and that is restock their libraries with the best books possible, including the course books that are especially bound for libraries so they can get a lot of use.

So I'm so excited to be here with all of you. I especially want to thank four foundations which have been very, very generous with the second round of grants. The AT&T Foundation, Conoco/Philips, Target, and Enterprise Corporation have been very generous so that we can continue to give grants across the gulf coast. And I want to thank them, their representatives of their corporations here. Thank you all very much for that.

And I also want to thank Marshall Payne out of Dallas, who's the chairman of the Gulf Coast Recovery Initiative. He's back here—and Pam Willeford, who's our director.

So, Pam, I believe we'll take it over to you next.

[At this point, the public portion of the event concluded; however, the discussion continued, and no transcript was provided.]

NOTE: The President spoke at 11:04 a.m. at Warren Easton Senior High School. The First Lady referred to Marshall B. Payne, chairman, Gulf Coast School Library Recovery Initiative; and Pamela P. Willeford, chair, advisory committee, Laura Bush Foundation for America's Libraries. A tape was not available for verification of the content of these remarks.

Remarks on Hurricane Katrina Recovery Efforts in New Orleans

August 29, 2006

Thank you all. Thank you. Good morning. From our beginnings as a nation, the church steeple and the schoolhouse door have been enduring symbols of the American community, and so it is today in New Orleans. Earlier this morning, we gathered at St. Louis

Cathedral in the presence of a just God who asks us to love our neighbors as ourselves. And now we stand inside Warren Easton Senior High School. Warren Easton is the oldest public school in New Orleans.

In a little more than a week, its classrooms will again be filled with young men and women who will write the future of this great American city. And that future draws from a rich past—the music of Fats Domino, the stories of Tennessee Williams, shotgun houses and iron-lattice balconies, seafood gumbo, red beans and rice on Mondays.

Over the course of nearly three centuries, a city that once was the center of slave trade has been transformed to a unique and great American city. This city is a story of hope and dignity and perseverance. And it's these qualities that have seen you through trials of war and prejudice and natural disaster.

One year ago today, your beloved New Orleans and surrounding parishes and counties and the great State of Mississippi were struck by a cruel hurricane. And here in this city, there was flooding on a biblical scale. Less than 3 weeks later, with many of the homes and churches and schools still under water, I came to Jackson Square. I said we could not imagine America without the Crescent City and pledged that our Government would do its part. And today Laura and I have come back to discuss that pledge and your future.

I want to thank Don Powell, the Federal Coordinator of the Gulf Coast Rebuilding, who is with us today. I appreciate Admiral Thad Allen, who's now the Commandant of the United States Coast Guard, who is with us today. And I want to thank Lieutenant General Russ Honore.

I appreciate the members of the congressional delegation who have joined us today: Senator Mary Landrieu as well as Senator David Vitter and his wife, Wendy. Thank you both for being here. I want to thank Congressman William Jefferson and Andrea; Congressman Bobby Jindal; and Congressman Charlie Melancon and his wife, Peachy. Thank you all for joining us. Proud to be working with you.

I noticed that Mary brought her brother, Mitch, the Lieutenant Governor of the great State of Louisiana. Mitch, thanks for coming.

I want to thank the attorney general of the State of Louisiana. General, thank you for joining us. He's an alumnus of Warren Easton Senior High School. I appreciate so very much the superintendent of schools—State Superintendent of Schools Cecil Picard is with us today. I thank all those State and local officials who have come. I appreciate Jean Case, who is the chair of the President's Council on Service and Civic Participation.

I want to thank one of the fine, fine citizens of your State, a man who brings great dignity in anything he does, and that's Dr. Norman Francis, who is the chairman of the Louisiana Recovery Authority. I want to thank Lexi Medley, who is the principal of Warren Easton Senior High School. Happy birthday. Today is her birthday. We're not telling, are we? [*Laughter*] No, 25, okay.

I want to thank all those school administrators, teachers, librarians, and students who are here from not only—they're not only here from New Orleans, but they're from around the area, including Mississippi. Welcome. Thanks for coming.

When the waters broke through the levees a year ago, southern Louisiana was consumed by flood waters, and New Orleans faced the greatest disaster in its history. Eighty percent of your city was under water. Thousands of businesses were hurt. Tens of thousands of homes were damaged and destroyed, and hundreds of thousands of folks fled the region in perhaps the greatest dislocation of American citizens since the Dust Bowl of the 1930s.

Your fellow Americans offered you more than sympathy. They responded with action. Those of you who were stranded on rooftops looked to the sky for deliverance, and then you saw the Coast Guard choppers come. Members of Louisiana National Guard, who had just come back from Iraq, stepped forward to bring food and water and ice. On every street, in every parish, there were constant acts of selflessness.

Doctors and nurses stayed with patients; they went without food so that the sick and the infirm might be able to eat. Fishermen used their flat-bottom boats to form the "Cajun Navy" and pulled women and children and the elderly out of flooded homes, and brought them to dry ground. Volunteers

embraced frightened boys and girls with warm blankets and loving arms to reassure them somebody cared. In these and countless other acts of courage, we saw the very best of America.

Unfortunately, the hurricane also brought terrible scenes that we never thought we would see in America: Citizens drowned in their attics; desperate mothers crying out on national TV for food and water; a breakdown of law and order; and a government at all levels that fell short of its responsibilities.

When the rain stopped and this wounded city was laid bare, our television screens showed faces worn down by poverty and despair. For most of you, the storms were only the beginning of your difficulties. Katrina exposed the big things that need repairing; yet it's most devastating impact has been on the rhythms of everyday life.

Some of you still don't know whether you have a neighborhood to come back to. Others of you who made the decision to return are living in trailers. Many are separated from their loved ones and simply long just to go to church on a Sunday afternoon with somebody you care about. Many of you find yourself without jobs and struggling to make do without the convenience of a supermarket nearby. Many fear for your safety because of violent criminals. The challenge is not only to help rebuild, but the challenge is to help restore the soul.

I take full responsibility for the Federal Government's response, and a year ago I made a pledge that we will learn the lessons of Katrina and that we will do what it takes to help you recover. I've come back to New Orleans to tell you the words that I spoke on Jackson Square are just as true today as they were then.

Since I spoke those words, Members of the United States Congress from both political parties came together and committed more than \$110 billion to help the gulf coast recover. I felt it was important that our Government be generous to the people who suffered. I felt that step one of a process of recovery and renewal is money.

I also put a good man in charge of coordinating the Federal response for local rebuilding. I've already introduced him—his name is Don Powell. He's a good fellow. He's no

nonsense. He's a good listener, and when he finds hurdles in the way between intentions and results, he works to remove them. He's on the job now, and he's going to stay on the job until we get the job done. And I appreciate you, Don, for your service.

To make sure that we keep our promises and to make sure this good area recovers, we have got to give assurance to the citizens that if there is another natural disaster, we'll respond in better fashion. Every Department of my administration has looked at its response to last year's hurricanes and has recommended practical reforms, things to do to make sure that the response is better.

Chertoff—Secretary Chertoff has increased manpower and training for FEMA, strengthened partnerships with the Red Cross and the Department of Defense, improved communications among local, State, and Federal emergency teams, and has expanded supplies so that FEMA can feed up to a million people for about a week. We looked at what went right, and we looked at what went wrong, and we're addressing that which went wrong.

In Louisiana, we have pre-positioned supplies in advance of this year's hurricane season. The people of the gulf coast can know that at the Federal level and at the State level and at the local level, we've all assessed, and we're now working together in better fashion. We're better prepared. And step one of rebuilding is to assure people, if another hurricane comes, there will be a better, more effective response.

Secondly, in order to make sure that people understand there's hope and renewal in this area, they've got to have confidence in a stronger levee system. It became clear to me in my first of my many visits down here—the people said, "It's fine—you can talk all you want, just get the levees stronger." I think that was your message, Senator. *[Laughter]*

The Army of Corps of Engineers has been working nonstop—and I mean nonstop—to repair the damage and make 350 miles of the system stronger. I say 350 miles. Most people in America don't understand the nature of your levee system. They're extensive and require a lot of work, including rebuilding I-walls with T-walls. In other words, that

strengthens the foundations of levees. We're storm-proofing the pumping stations, and the pumping stations' capacities are being increased. We're elevating electrical systems so they can work during a flood.

Today, almost the entire flood protection system around New Orleans has been restored to pre-Katrina level. And in many places, the system is now better than it was before Katrina. We're working to make the levees stronger than ever by 2010, and we will study what we need to do to give New Orleans even greater protection.

One thing that the American people have got to understand is that in order to make sure the levee system works, there has to be a barrier system to protect the State of Louisiana. I strongly urge the United States Congress to pass energy legislation that will give the State of Louisiana more revenues from offshore leases so they can restore the wetlands.

The Army Corps of Engineers has been working with local citizens in difficult circumstances. I've been on the levees; I've seen these good folks working. One such fellow is Kevin Wagner. He's with us today. He's an engineer whose house had 12 feet of water after the storm. I think it's important for people to listen to what Kevin said. He said, "For me, it's personal. My whole family lived down there in St. Bernard Parish. Everyone who's working on this effort has the same motivation and the same sense of urgency."

There is a sense of urgency, and I want to thank those in the Corps and those who are helping the Corps send reassuring messages to the people who live here and the people who want to move back here.

A more hopeful New Orleans means we've got to get rid of the broken furniture and old refrigerators and get rid of the wreckage. You can't rebuild until you remove the rubble. The sheer tonnage of debris in Louisiana is many times greater than any previous disaster. And after many months and more than \$1.8 billion from the Federal Government, from the taxpayers, more than three-quarters of the debris has now been cleared.

You know, it's amazing when you really think about the effort. Of course, government has a part, but the truth of the matter

is a lot of the effort, a lot of the success, and a lot of results were achieved because of faith-based and community groups. Groups like Katrina Krewe have mobilized thousands of volunteers, ranging from students on spring break to moms and retirees. Isn't it interesting to have a country where people are willing to show up to help clean out houses and remove debris for someone they didn't even know? It's a spectacular nation, isn't it, when compassion overflows to overwhelming?

The Krewe's founder, Becky Zaheri, is with us. She left; then she came back. And she said, "I went and visited other States and they were beautiful, but they were not home." That's the spirit that we're trying to capture. That's the spirit we want people who are watching from afar to understand; this "home" is beginning to be.

The debris is getting cleaned. As a matter of fact, in order to make sure that the Federal—that we continue to clean the remaining debris, the Federal Government has agreed to pay 100 percent of reimbursement costs through the end of the year on the five hardest hit parishes.

We need to get homes available for people. A renewed New Orleans is a New Orleans with new homes. Everybody understands that. The people here, and those who have left, they all tell me one thing—particularly those who—"I miss New Orleans," is what they say. But we got to make sure they have a place to move to. Trailers are only temporary. The goal is to make sure that communities are restored because there's new homes. That's the goal. And we will help.

I want to thank the Louisiana Recovery Authority. Dr. Francis and his team have done a really good job of developing a strategy, a plan, to help renew communities through homes. You know, when we first got going in this deal, we had choices to make, and a lot of people said, "Why don't you just take it over, Washington? Why don't you make all the decisions for the local folks?" That's not the way I think. I trust the people like Dr. Francis and the parish presidents and the mayors and the city councilmen to make the right decisions for the people of this community. And so the Federal Government is working with the Louisiana Recovery

Authority to help people get back in their homes. And we've appropriated more than \$10 billion to help people achieve that dream.

Under this program, eligible homeowners will receive up to \$150,000 for damage not covered by insurance or other Federal assistance. All of us agree, at all levels of government, that we've got to get the money as quickly as possible in the hands of the people, so they can rebuild their lives and help this city recover.

A more hopeful New Orleans means replacing a school system that didn't work with one that will. And I congratulate the good people of New Orleans and the LRA for coming up with a novel plan to address failure that had caused—in many cases, was a root cause of poverty. I'm excited for you about the innovative charter school system you have put in place. I applaud you for thinking differently. I can't thank you enough for seizing the moment to say to the good folks and the families, we will do a better job with the school system here in New Orleans.

I know Margaret Spellings was down here recently—she's been down here a lot, and she should. We provided about a billion dollars to help the school system to get people back in school. The Federal Government has helped. It's very important, however, that people understand that the best way to make sure the school system delivers excellence is there be local control of schools, that people be in charge of the future—local people be in charge of the future of the New Orleans schools.

Warren Easton Senior High School is a new charter school. One year ago, the classrooms and corridors were covered by about 10 feet of water. Like many other schools in New Orleans, Warren Easton is now reopened. When you say "charter school", it means the funding actually follows the students, which makes schools more accountable to parents. It means parents will be more involved in the schools.

By reopening as a charter school, Warren Easton is providing a new model. The motto of this school is, "We believe in success." A revitalized New Orleans needs a reformed public school system where everybody can

say, "We not only believe in success; we see success for the good of the future of this State."

Laura mentioned that the First Lady's Foundation established a Gulf Coast School Library Recovery Initiative, and they started granting—giving grants—more grants today to help libraries restock. Her view is the view of many, in that the center of a school is the library. Without a library, schools can't realize their full potential. And so she and her foundation and folks in the private sector have awarded more than a million dollars in grants to 20 schools, including \$70,000 to the library here at this high school.

Nancy Hernandez is the librarian. She is a graduate from this high school. She puts it this way: "I think the library is the heart of the school. For a child, there is nothing that can replace the joy that comes from a book." And she is right. And I want to thank you, Laura, for helping people realize dreams with new books, in the midst of helping this public school system recover.

New Orleans' school system is enriched by the religious schools here. And the Cathedral Academy has been educating in New Orleans for nearly three decades. There's an interesting story I'm about to tell you. Last October, Cathedral Academy became the first school to reopen. That was last October. Sister Mary Rose is the principal, and she believes this: No child would be turned away from her school's front door.

For 10-year-old Aaliyah Carr, who is with us today here, the return to school was a day she will never forget. I love what she said. She said, "I was so happy, I could hear the choir singing in my head. It was a long time before I thought I'd see a school again, and I'm so glad to be walking these halls." Aaliyah says it better than I can. Education is the gateway to a brighter future. Education provides the light of hope for a young generation of children.

It's really important—I look forward to working with the Federal Government to provide opportunity scholarships for the poorest of our families so they have a choice as to whether they go to a religious school or a public school. It's good for New Orleans to have competing school systems. It's good for our country to have a vibrant parochial

school system. And I applaud those who are very much involved with the Catholic school system here in the great city of New Orleans.

I predict, a year from now people are going to be wondering where they can find workers and wondering what they're going to do about the equipment shortages, supply shortages. I see an incredibly bright future for the entrepreneur. A lot of the revitalization of New Orleans and the area—surrounding area is going to come because there's more businesses opening and more shops reopening.

I believe that Government has a role to play in encouraging entrepreneurship, and so I worked with Members of the United States Congress, both political parties, to pass Go Zone legislation. Go Zone legislation gives entrepreneurs and small businesses tax incentives to invest in this area, to help jumpstart this economy and provide jobs. The Go Zone legislation is set to expire. The United States Congress needs to extend this good piece of legislation.

There's a guy named Joe Peters—he's here with us. Where are you, Joe? Somewhere. Got a lousy seat. *[Laughter]* I want to tell you what he said. He's a Vietnam vet. He runs a tire store on St. Claude Avenue. Right after the flood, the waters went up to his desktop. He and his workers, though, reopened the shop. They had a job to do. They were fixing tires for police cruisers and family cars that were trying to get to safety. They were providing an important service. Here's what Joe says about this city's future. See, he's an entrepreneur. He's a can-do person. He believes in the future. He said, "This ain't nothing. This is New Orleans. We were here before there was a United States. You cannot kill a city like this."

I have returned to make it clear to people that I understand we're marking the first anniversary of the storm, but this anniversary is not an end. And so I come back to say that we will stand with the people of southern Louisiana and southern Mississippi until the job is done.

A lot of work has been accomplished, and I congratulate the people here. But there's more work to be done. The work ahead includes making sure that your streets are safe. And to make sure that people understand we

at the Federal level understand we still have a continuing commitment, Attorney General Al Gonzales came down here. And he announced a new Justice Department initiative to send more Federal agents and prosecutors to New Orleans to help local law enforcement crack down on violent crime. If you want there to be renewal and recovery, like we all do, you've got to crack down on violent crime. You've got to send a message that the streets of New Orleans are safe. And we'll help you do so. The work ahead includes—*[applause]*.

Last night I had dinner with your parish presidents and Mayor Nagin and Oliver Thomas and the good doctor and a lot of other good folks, and one message was clear to me: That for this city to recover, there needs to be help on infrastructure. There needs to be better sewers and better infrastructure around which a new New Orleans can emerge. I listened carefully, and to the extent there's bureaucracy standing in the way, me and Don Powell will—or Don Powell and I—excuse me, darlin'—Don Powell and I—*[applause]*—Don Powell and I will work to get rid of them.

We can also—we'll work with your leaders to achieve a larger goal, and that is this: To rebuild a New Orleans where every child who grows up here feels a great part of the American promise. That's the challenge. And we've got a role to play, and we'll play it. That's what I'm here to say—we'll play it.

But I also want to remind you that the Federal Government cannot do this job alone, nor should it be expected to do the job alone. This is your home; you know what needs to be done. And a reborn Louisiana must reflect the views of the people down here and their vision and your priorities. State and parish authorities have a responsibility to set priorities, and they're doing so. We all have a responsibility to clear obstacles that stand in the way of meeting goals. And we've got to make sure the money that has started to flow continues to flow.

At this critical moment, there are a lot of people making big decisions about where their future lies. I understand that, and so does the LRA and Governor Blanco and local authorities. We all understand that. We know there are people weighing a big decision. We

want to make sure that, when they do make the decision to rebuild, that the rules are clear and that the zoning decisions by local authorities make sense. That's a local decision to make. But we are going to make sure that we work closely together to clear up any ambiguity. See, we want people coming home. We want the rules clear, so when people come home, they know that they'll be coming to a safer, better place.

I appreciate the fact that State and local authorities are working together and making tough decisions. It hadn't been easy, but the storm was a big storm that created a lot of damage, and the good folks down here are working together. They're thinking smart. They've got a plan, a strategy to help rebuild, and the Federal Government will stand with you.

The private sector has a responsibility to help down here. You know, during the storm, American companies showed a lot of resourcefulness to get supplies and relief to the affected areas, and I know everybody down here thanks private—corporate America for doing that. But now that the immediate crisis has passed, the people of this region are looking to corporate America to see if they're here for the long haul. So I ask America's business leaders to show the people here the same commitment you showed during the flood. New Orleans is going to rise again, and by planting your corporate flag here now and contributing to this city's rebirth, you'll gain some loyal customers when times get better.

The people of this city have a responsibility as well. I know you love New Orleans, and New Orleans needs you. She needs people coming home. She needs people—she needs those saints to come marching back, is what she needs. New Orleans is calling her children home. I hear it from all of the local officials. They say they got a plan in place and money coming to make New Orleans a hospitable place.

One woman who's come back is a woman named Samantha George. She is with us today. A year ago, the future looked bleak for Samantha and her four young daughters. Their home in Mid-City had five feet of water in it. Everything they owned was gone. And so they left, and they went to Mississippi and Georgia, as this good mother searched

for work. At one point, Samantha and her daughters were living in cars. She felt alone and abandoned. And that's when she walked into the office of Catholic Charities and met a lady named Peggy Matthews, who's also here.

Peggy wiped the tears off Samantha's face. She gave her love and encouragement. Samantha agreed to enroll in Peggy's job-training class and give it one more try. And within 2 weeks, she found work. And at the same time, Catholic Charities helped her with food and clothes and diapers and a gift card to Wal-Mart that allowed her to buy the uniform she would need for her new job. She found help and love.

Catholic Charities also helped Samantha find a house in the Carrollton neighborhood near Lafayette Academy. It's a new charter school that her daughters will be attending very soon. Recently she found a new job she loves; she's now a nurse. For the first time in her life, Samantha says she feels a sense of ownership and control over her future. Here's what she says: "I was just hoping for some motivation so I could keep going. I think God sent me to Catholic Charities, and I think of myself as blessed because now I'm able to help other people who cannot help themselves."

Samantha's story is a story of renewal. And it may sound like a familiar story to people who know the history of New Orleans; it's always been a city of second chance. When your first settlement was leveled by a storm, you rebuilt again. When fire struck, you replaced the wood buildings with brick. When you were ravaged by war and epidemics of malaria and smallpox and yellow fever, you picked yourself up and you prospered. And when the hurricanes hit in the past, you cleaned up, you salvaged what you could, and you rebuilt. Every time New Orleans came back—louder, brasher, and better.

We see the same resolve today. In keeping with the tradition of this city, New Orleans again looks to music to express her feelings. And these feelings were captured on a benefit album called "Higher Ground." One of those songs is called "Come Sunday," written by Duke Ellington. In her rendition of this classic, Cassandra Williams implores a loving

God to “please look down and see my people through.”

Sunday has not yet come to New Orleans, but you can see it ahead. And as you approach that joyful day, you can move forward with confidence in your abilities, trust in the compassion of your fellow Americans, and faith in a loving God who makes the path through mighty waters. God bless.

NOTE: The President spoke at 11:35 a.m. at Warren Easton Senior High School. In his remarks, he referred to Lt. Gen. Russel L. Honore, USA, commanding general, First United States Army; Andrea Green-Jefferson, wife of Representative William J. Jefferson; Louisiana State Attorney General Charles C. Foti, Jr.; Sister Mary Rose Bingham, principal, Cathedral Academy of New Orleans; Mayor C. Ray Nagin of New Orleans, LA; Oliver M. Thomas, Jr., president, New Orleans City Council; Gov. Kathleen Babineaux Blanco of Louisiana; and entertainer Cassandra Wilson. The transcript released by the Office of the Press Secretary also included the remarks of the First Lady, who introduced the President.

Executive Order 13411—Improving Assistance for Disaster Victims

August 29, 2006

By the authority vested in me as President by the Constitution and the laws of the United States of America, including the Robert T. Stafford Disaster Relief and Emergency Assistance Act, as amended (42 U.S.C. 5121 *et seq.*) (the “Stafford Act”), and to take further actions to improve the delivery of Federal disaster assistance, it is hereby ordered as follows:

Section 1. Policy. It is the policy of the Federal Government to ensure that individuals who are victims of a terrorist attack, natural disaster, or other incident that is the subject of an emergency or major disaster declaration under the Stafford Act, and who are thereby eligible for financial or other assistance delivered by any department or agency of the executive branch (Federal disaster assistance) have prompt and efficient access to Federal disaster assistance, as well as information regarding assistance available from State and local government and private sector sources.

Sec. 2. Task Force on Disaster Assistance Coordination. (a) Plan to Improve Delivery of Federal Disaster Assistance. To further the policy in section 1 of this order, there is established the interagency “Task Force on Disaster Assistance Coordination” (Task Force). The Task Force shall develop a plan to streamline and otherwise improve the delivery of Federal disaster assistance (Plan). The Plan shall:

(i) include an inventory of Federal disaster assistance programs and assess the effectiveness of their respective delivery mechanisms;

(ii) recommend specific actions to improve the delivery of Federal disaster assistance, which shall include actions to provide a centralized application process for Federal disaster assistance; provide a centralized and continuously updated clearinghouse from which disaster victims may obtain information regarding Federal disaster assistance and State and local government and private sector sources of disaster assistance; reduce unnecessarily duplicative application forms and processes for Federal disaster assistance; and strengthen controls designed to prevent improper payments and other forms of fraud, waste, and abuse; and

(iii) include an implementation schedule for the Plan’s recommendations that provides for the phased implementation of the Plan by December 31, 2008, including quarterly milestones and metrics to be used to measure and evaluate implementation.

(b) Membership of the Task Force. (i) The Task Force shall consist exclusively of the following members, or their designees who shall be at the Assistant Secretary level (or its equivalent) or higher:

(A) the Secretary of Homeland Security, who shall serve as Chair;

(B) the Secretary of the Treasury;

(C) the Secretary of Defense;

(D) the Attorney General;

(E) the Secretary of Agriculture;

(F) the Secretary of Commerce;

(G) the Secretary of Labor;

(H) the Secretary of Health and Human Services;

(I) the Secretary of Housing and Urban Development;

(J) the Secretary of Education;

(K) the Secretary of Veterans Affairs;

(L) the Director of the Office of Personnel Management;

(M) the Commissioner of Social Security;

(N) the Administrator of the Small Business Administration;

(O) the Director of the Office of Management and Budget; and

(P) such other officers of the United States as the Secretary of Homeland Security may designate from time to time.

(ii) The Secretary of Homeland Security, or the Secretary's designee, shall convene and preside at meetings of the Task Force, determine its agenda, direct its work, and, as appropriate to address specific subject matters, establish and direct subgroups of the Task Force. A member of the Task Force may designate, to perform Task Force subgroup functions of the member, any person who is part of such member's department or agency and who is either an officer of the United States appointed by the President or a member of the Senior Executive Service.

(c) Plan Approval and Implementation. Not later than March 1, 2007, the Secretary of Homeland Security shall submit the Plan to the President for approval through the Assistant to the President for Homeland Security and Counterterrorism and the Director of the Office of Management and Budget. Upon approval of the Plan by the President, the Secretary of Homeland Security, assisted by the Task Force, shall coordinate the implementation of the Plan. Until the completion of such implementation, the Secretary of Homeland Security shall submit a quarterly progress report to the Assistant to the President for Homeland Security and Counterterrorism and the Director of the Office of Management and Budget.

Sec. 3. Assistance and Support. To the extent permitted by law, the heads of all executive departments and agencies shall provide such assistance and information as the Secretary of Homeland Security may request in carrying out the Secretary's responsibilities under this order. Consistent with applicable law and subject to the availability of appropriations, the Department of Homeland Security shall provide necessary funding and administrative support for the Task Force.

Sec. 4. Administration. This order shall: (a) be implemented in a manner consistent

with applicable laws, including Federal laws protecting the information privacy rights and other legal rights of Americans, and subject to the availability of appropriations;

(b) be implemented in a manner consistent with the statutory authority of the principal officers of executive departments and agencies as heads of their respective departments or agencies; and

(c) not be construed to impair or otherwise affect the functions of the Director of the Office of Management and Budget relating to budget, administrative, regulatory, and legislative responsibilities.

Sec. 5. Judicial Review. This order is intended only to improve the internal management of the Federal Government and is not intended to, and does not, create any rights or benefits, substantive or procedural, enforceable at law or in equity by a party against the United States, its departments, agencies, or entities, its officers, employees, or agents, or any other person.

George W. Bush

The White House,
August 29, 2006.

[Filed with the Office of the Federal Register, 8:45 a.m., September 5, 2006]

NOTE: This Executive order will be published in the *Federal Register* on September 6.

Proclamation 8044—National Ovarian Cancer Awareness Month, 2006

August 29, 2006

By the President of the United States of America

A Proclamation

National Ovarian Cancer Awareness Month provides an opportunity to raise awareness of risk factors, prevention, and treatment of this deadly disease. Our Nation is committed to fighting ovarian cancer, finding its cure, and providing hope and healing to those who are affected by it.

While ovarian cancer remains one of the leading causes of cancer-related death among women in our country, scientists have made

significant progress in understanding the factors associated with it. Women of all ages can develop this cancer, but studies have shown risk increases with age. Other factors associated with ovarian cancer include family history, obesity, use of fertility drugs, and a prior occurrence of certain cancers. Because the chances of surviving ovarian cancer are higher when it is diagnosed and treated in its early stages, women should talk to their doctors about risk factors and screenings for this disease.

America leads the world in medical research, and we are committed to continuing progress in research for prevention, better treatments, and a cure for ovarian cancer. This year, the National Institutes of Health will invest an estimated \$106 million in ovarian cancer research, and the National Cancer Institute is sponsoring clinical trials to explore new ways to improve ovarian cancer treatment. The Department of Defense will also dedicate an estimated \$10 million for its Ovarian Cancer Research Program, and the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) will invest an estimated \$5 million to ovarian cancer research. The CDC is additionally partnering with private organizations to sponsor ovarian cancer survivor courses for patients, as well as their friends and loved ones, following successful cancer treatment.

During National Ovarian Cancer Awareness Month, we honor the victims and survivors of this disease for their courage, hope, and perseverance, and we thank the families and friends who provide these individuals with comfort and care. Our Nation is grateful to medical professionals, researchers, and all those whose tireless efforts are making a positive difference in the lives of countless women in our country. By working together, we can continue to fight ovarian cancer and help more of our citizens defeat this devastating disease.

Now, Therefore, I, George W. Bush, President of the United States of America, by virtue of the authority vested in me by the Constitution and laws of the United States, do hereby proclaim September 2006 as National Ovarian Cancer Awareness Month. I call upon government officials, businesses, communities, health care profes-

sionals, educators, volunteers, and the people of the United States to continue our Nation's strong commitment to preventing and treating ovarian cancer.

In Witness Whereof, I have hereunto set my hand this twenty-ninth day of August, in the year of our Lord two thousand six, and of the Independence of the United States of America the two hundred and thirty-first.

George W. Bush

[Filed with the Office of the Federal Register, 8:45 a.m., August 31, 2006]

NOTE: This proclamation was published in the *Federal Register* on September 1.

Proclamation 8045—National Prostate Cancer Awareness Month, 2006

August 29, 2006

By the President of the United States of America

A Proclamation

The United States continues to move forward in its fight against cancer, yet an estimated 27,000 American sons, fathers, brothers, and husbands will be lost to prostate cancer this year. As we observe National Prostate Cancer Awareness Month, we underscore our commitment to defeating prostate cancer by raising awareness about its risk factors, promoting the importance of early detection and treatment, and advancing our understanding of the disease and how to stop it.

Medical research has shown that there are steps men can take to reduce their chance of developing prostate cancer. For many men, regular exercise and healthy eating habits may decrease the likelihood of developing this deadly disease. Men over the age of 50, African-American men, and men with family medical histories that include prostate cancer face the greatest risk—and they can realize the greatest benefits from early detection, when treatment is most effective. All men should discuss their risk of prostate cancer with their physicians, determine the best screening and early-detection options, and adopt healthy lifestyles. Young men are also encouraged to find out whether a family

member has ever been diagnosed with prostate cancer and to seek medical advice at an earlier age if a medical history exists.

The progress we have made in the battle against prostate cancer is remarkable, yet more work remains. America leads the world in cutting-edge medical research, and the Federal Government will continue to do its part to support work that will lead to better diagnostic tools and innovative treatments for prostate cancer. By providing substantial funding for programs at the National Institutes of Health, National Cancer Institute, Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, and Department of Defense, my Administration aims to improve our ability to prevent, detect, treat, and ultimately cure prostate cancer.

During National Prostate Cancer Awareness Month, America honors the victims and survivors of prostate cancer and applauds the family members and friends who provide love and encouragement. We also commend the medical professionals and researchers who are working to administer care, improve treatments, and find cures. Prostate cancer can be defeated, and we will continue this fight until the day when the battle to beat prostate cancer has been won.

Now, Therefore, I, George W. Bush, President of the United States of America, by virtue of the authority vested in me by the Constitution and laws of the United States, do hereby proclaim September 2006 as National Prostate Cancer Awareness Month. I call upon government officials, businesses, communities, health care professionals, educators, and the people of the United States to reaffirm our Nation's strong and ongoing campaign against prostate cancer.

In Witness Whereof, I have hereunto set my hand this twenty-ninth day of August in the year of our Lord two thousand six, and of the Independence of the United States of America the two hundred and thirty-first.

George W. Bush

[Filed with the Office of the Federal Register, 8:45 a.m., August 31, 2006]

NOTE: This proclamation was published in the *Federal Register* on September 1.

Remarks at Cotham's in the City and an Exchange With Reporters in Little Rock, Arkansas

August 30, 2006

The President. Asa recommended I come in and get some fried chocolate chip pie, so I did. I'm looking forward to eating it. It's a pleasure to be here with you. I've known Asa for a long time. He's the kind of fellow who can set an agenda and then achieve the results necessary to get the job done. I've seen him first hand in Washington. He's a fellow I called upon to help us get the Homeland Security Department up and running. And so I want to thank you for having me come here.

Asa Hutchinson. Thank you, Mr. President.

The President. I'm proud to call you friend, and thanks for the advice.

Mr. Hutchinson. You can't beat the fried pie here at Cotham's in Little Rock.

The President. Well, I'm looking forward to eating it. When you get to 60, you've got to be a little careful about what you eat. But nevertheless, I'm going to give it a shot, on the recommendation of my friends. Anyway, it's good to be back here in Little Rock. This is a good town. I've come here a lot, as candidate and as President. I appreciate my friends here; I appreciate the values of the people that live in this State. I hope to be back soon. Anyway—

Mr. Hutchinson. Mr. President, we're glad to have you. It's been a great visit. Thanks for helping us out. And we welcome you back anytime. And thank you for your leadership.

The President. Thank you, sir. We'll see you all in Tennessee.

President's Upcoming Speeches/War on Terror

Q. Sir, do you think your new series of speeches are going to have an impact on mid-term elections?

The President. My series of speeches—they're not political speeches. They're speeches about the future of this country, and they're speeches to make it clear that if we retreat before the job is done, this Nation would become even more in jeopardy.

These are important times, and I seriously hope people wouldn't politicize these issues that I'm going to talk about. We have a duty in this country to defeat terrorists. That's why we'll stay on the offense and bring them to justice before they hurt us, and that's why we'll work to spread liberty in order to spread the peace.

Anyway, thank you all.

NOTE: The President spoke at 2 p.m. Participating in the event was gubernatorial candidate Asa Hutchinson of Arkansas. A tape was not available for verification of the content of these remarks.

Remarks at a Dinner for Senatorial Candidate Bob Corker and the Tennessee Republican Party in Nashville, Tennessee

August 30, 2006

Thanks for the warm welcome. Appreciate you treating this Texan with such a warm Tennessee welcome. What Corker didn't tell you was, is that the first choice was Laura for the dinner—[laughter]—who, by the way, sends her love to all our friends and agrees with me that Bob Corker is the right man for the United States Senate for Tennessee.

I think it makes sense to send somebody up to Washington who's not a lawyer. Nothing wrong with lawyers, but we got a lot of them up there. [Laughter] It makes sense to have somebody who understands how the economy works because he was a businessman. It makes sense to send somebody up there who understands how local communities work because he was the mayor of an important Tennessee city. It makes sense to send a man of integrity and decency to Washington, DC. And that man is Bob Corker.

I'm proud to call him friend, and you'll be proud to call him United States Senator. And I want to thank you for your help. I thank you for giving of your money, and I urge you to give of your time. I know there's a lot of grassroots activists who are here. And Bob and Elizabeth are going to be counting on your help coming down the stretch. He's got the message; he's got the courage; but he's going to need you to put up the signs and make the phone calls and go to community centers and remind the good people of

this State—Republican, Democrat, and independent—that when you have somebody of his caliber, they need to go to the polls and put him in office.

So thanks for coming. Thanks for organizing this great dinner. And I'm proud to be here. And when Corker gets elected, he's going to be replacing one of the finest citizens your State has ever produced in Bill Frist. It's been my high honor to serve with him, and we're not through yet. He's going to get back up there in September and make sure we get legislation to help protect this country. It's been a joy working with a citizen like Bill. We're going to miss him in Washington, DC. But I take comfort in knowing that he'll be replaced by a fine citizen of this State in Bob Corker. Mr. Leader, thank you for your friendship, and thank you for your courage.

I'm proud also to be here with members of the Tennessee congressional delegation, Congressman Jimmy Duncan, Congressman Zach Wamp, and Congresswoman Marsha Blackburn.

Earlier I had the privilege of meeting a man who is running hard for Governor of this important State, and I ask you to support Senator Jim Bryson in his quest to be the Governor of the State of Tennessee. And by the way, Senator, if you want some good advice, you ought to turn to Winfield Dunn or Don Sundquist, members who served—people who served well in this important State. I'm glad those two former Governors are here. Thank you for coming.

I'm also proud to be here with a man who served our country with such distinction as the Senate majority leader and under my administration as the Ambassador to Japan, and that would be Senator Howard Baker. I thank Senator Ron Ramsey for being here. He's the majority leader of the senate. I want to thank all the local folks and State folks who have come. Thanks for running; thanks for serving. I appreciate you working hard to make this State a fantastic place.

I bring a message of optimism to you. I believe, and I know, our party is a political party that trusts the wisdom of the American people. Ours is a party that is willing to confront challenges instead of passing them on to future generations. Ours is the party with

a positive vision that makes a difference for every citizen of this country. I appreciate you supporting the Republican Party as you support Bob Corker.

We face historic times here in this country. These are tough times. They're difficult times because we face an enemy that longs to hurt America. Much of my thinking about the world in which we live, of course, was shaped on that fateful day of September the 11th, 2001. It's a day I'll never forget. It's a day—after that day, I vowed to the American people that we will do whatever it takes to defend this country from further attack. And I need people in the United States Senate standing by—side by side who understand our most important task is the security of the United States of America.

I need people in Washington, DC, who are willing to give those who are responsible for protecting America all the tools they need—tools such as the PATRIOT Act; tools such as programs that say if Al Qaida is calling into the United States, we want to know why, in order to protect the United States of America.

We face an enemy that has an ideology; they believe things. The best way to describe their ideology is to relate to you the fact that they think the opposite of the way we think. We treasure the freedom to worship. We value the freedom for people to express themselves in the public square. We honor the right for people to be able to raise their children in a peaceful society so they can realize their dreams. The enemy we face doesn't believe in dissent. They don't believe in the freedom to worship. They got a narrow view of freedom. But this enemy is particularly lethal because they're willing to use whatever tactic is necessary to achieve their objective.

You know, right after September the 11th, I knew that one of my challenges would be to remind the American people about the dangers of the world. I knew that the natural tendency for our country would be to hope that the lessons of September the 11th would be faded memory. Earlier this month, thanks to the good intelligence work of Great Britain, and with our help, we uncovered yet another plot—a plot in which these killers who do not share our belief of freedom were will-

ing to take innocent lives in order to achieve their objective.

These are historic times, and we must have people in the United States Congress who understand the stakes. After September the 11th, I vowed to the American people we would use all assets at our disposal to protect you. And the best way to defend America is to stay on the offense against these killers and bring them to justice before they hurt this country again.

We got brave troops around the world who are on the hunt, who are doing their duty to protect the American people. I can't tell you how inspiring it is to be the Commander in Chief of a United States military full of men and women who understand the dangers and have volunteered to serve our country. And we need people in the United States Senate who will make sure that these troops have all the equipment, all the training, all the support they need to do their jobs and protect this country.

In the short run, we'll defend this country by staying on the offense; in the long run, we've got an equally effective weapon, and that is freedom and liberty. The way to defeat an ideology of hate, the way to defeat an ideology that exploits hopelessness and despair, is to spread liberty. It's the calling of our time. The United States of America must understand that freedom is universal, that there is an Almighty, and the great gift of that Almighty to each man and woman in this world is the desire to be free. I strongly believe, deep in the soul of people all across the globe is the desire to live in liberty. I strongly believe that mothers all across the world long to raise their children in a hopeful society. And it's up to us, working with our friends and allies, to defeat the ideology of hate with an ideology of hope. And that hope is based upon the universal principle of liberty and freedom.

One of the lessons of September the 11th is that this Nation must take threats seriously before they come to hurt us; that we just can't hope anymore that things calm down or that there's a rational way of thinking with an enemy; that we must be bold in our actions in defense of the American people. I saw a threat in Iraq, and so did Members

of the United States Congress of both political parties. Saddam Hussein was a state sponsor of terror. Saddam Hussein had used weapons of mass destruction. Saddam Hussein had been shooting at our pilots. Saddam Hussein paid families of suicide bombers. Saddam Hussein was a threat, and the world is better off without Saddam Hussein in power.

And now the central front in the war on terror, the central front in this struggle to protect ourselves, is Iraq. You know, amazing things have happened in Iraq, when you think about it. Oh, I know the news is full with terrible suiciders, and it shakes our will. I know that. It's troubling for many of our citizens, no matter what their political party is. But that's what the enemy wants. They want to trouble us. They're willing to take innocent life to cause us to forget our mission and purpose and the calling of this in the 21st century.

But when you really think about it, amazing progress has been made. Twelve million people went to the polls. These are people who had just recently lived under the thumb of a brutal tyrant who killed hundreds of thousands of his own people. And yet, when given a chance, these Iraqis said, "We want to be free; we want to self-govern; we want a government of and by and for the people." And since then a government has been formed, a unity government headed by a good man named Prime Minister Maliki.

Our task is to stand with those who reject extremism and violence. Our task is to train the Iraqis so they can defend themselves. Our task is to achieve a goal of an ally in the war on terror that can defend itself, sustain itself. And we're on our way to achieving that mission.

Now I understand there's a serious—[*ap- plause*]*—*there are Saddamists, Al Qaida, extremists, militia, all attempting to stop the advance of democracy. That should say something to the American people: What type of mentality is it that fears freedom? What kind of mentality is it that can't stand the thought of liberty? It's a mentality based upon an ideology that is foreign to our way of thinking. It's a mentality based upon an ideology of hate, and they have aspirations. Their goal—this is what they said, not me—

is to drive us out of the Middle East because they want to spread their view, their vision.

If we leave Iraq before the job is done, as some have advocated, this will be a major defeat for the United States of America in the global war on terror. If we leave Iraq before the job is done, it will embolden an enemy that wants to harm the American people. If we leave Iraq before the job is done, it will create a terrorist state in the heart of the Middle East; a terrorist state much more dangerous than Afghanistan was before we removed the Taliban; a terrorist state with the capacity to fund its activities because of the oil reserves of Iraq. If we leave before the job is done, it will shred the credibility of the United States of America. If we leave before the job is done, it will have meant incredibly brave souls will have given their lives for nothing. And if we leave Iraq before the job is done, as General Abizaid has said, "They will follow us here."

The stakes in Iraq are high. It's very important for the American people to understand that the security of the United States of America, the capacity for our children to grow up in a peaceful world, in large part depends on our willingness to help this young Iraqi democracy succeed.

And we will succeed. And when we succeed, it will be a major defeat for the ideologues of hate. And when we succeed, it will serve—democracy will serve as a powerful example for others in a region that is desperate for free societies. And when we succeed, we'll create a valuable ally in the global war on terror.

Our mission must be to stay on the offense and defeat them overseas so we do not have to face them here at home. This country ought to have confidence in our capacity to succeed. We have faced these kind of challenges before. We have stared down and defeated the ideology of fascism. We won a cold war. The path to victory was never straight-lined, but the path to victory required perseverance, strength of character, and determination. It's important to have Members of the United States Senate like Bob Corker who share that sense of purpose and determination.

You know, recently I was just right down the road here with the Prime Minister of

Japan, and he and I went to Graceland. [Laughter] It was an interesting moment. [Laughter] I chose to take my friend Prime Minister Koizumi there—one, I had never been there. [Laughter] So it was a little selfish. Secondly, he's an Elvis fan; he loved Elvis. And I thought it would be fun to take him there. Thirdly, I wanted to send a message to the American people. Imagine somebody in the late '40s saying, one of these days an American President will be taking a Prime Minister from Japan to the home of a famous singer. You know, right after that war, you can imagine what the reaction would have been. They'd say, "Man, that guy is off his rocker." [Laughter]

We had fought the Japanese in a bloody, bloody conflict. And it was a brutal war. I find it ironic that my dad fought the Japanese, and yet some 60 years later, I was on Air Force One flying down to Memphis, Tennessee, with the Prime Minister of a former enemy. And on that plane we weren't talking about Elvis's songs; we were talking about how to work together to keep the peace. We were talking about North Korea. I thanked this good man for sending 1,000 Japanese troops to help the young democracy in Iraq succeed. He understands what I know: Democracy yields the peace.

If we want peace for the long run for our children and grandchildren, we must work hard to spread liberty. Something happened between World War II and my trip to Graceland, and what happened was, Japan adopted a Japanese-style democracy. Democracy and liberty have the capacity to change an enemy into an ally. Someday, an American President will be sitting down with duly elected leaders from the Middle East talking about how to keep the peace, and our children and our grandchildren will be better off.

I appreciate Bob Corker's understanding of the role of government in our economy. He and I know the role of Government is not to create wealth; the role of Government is to create an environment in which the entrepreneurial spirit can flourish in the United States of America. And that means—[*ap-
plause*]

Here's what we know: We know that when a soul has more of his or her own money to spend, save, or invest, the economy grows. There's a philosophical difference between what we think and what the other bunch thinks. They think they can spend your money better than you can. We believe the more of the money you have in your pocket, the stronger the economy grows and the more hopeful America is.

And our philosophy is working. Our economy is growing at 4.2 percent annual rate in the first 6 months of this year. That's faster than any other major industrialized nation in the world. For 35 straight months, our economy has added jobs. People are working in the United States of America. The unemployment rate is 4.8 percent, and since August of 2003, we've added 5.5 million new jobs. The tax cuts we provided for the entrepreneurs and small businesses of America are making a difference for the working people of this country.

Now the question is, how do we keep the economy growing? Well, it starts with making sure the tax cuts we passed are permanent, so Congress can't undo them. We want there to be certainty in the Tax Code. We want people planning their future knowing that taxes will remain low, and I need a man like Bob Corker who understands that.

You know, you hear the talk in the campaign. They say, "Oh, well, we've got to balance the budget." We'll balance the budget, but we're not going to balance the budget and wreck the economy at the same time. You see people say, "The best way to balance the budget"—some in Washington say, "Just give us more of your own money." But that's not the way Washington works. If you send more of your own money up there, they will figure out new ways as to how to spend your money. The best way to balance this budget is to keep progrowth economic policies in place and be fiscally sound with the people's money.

You know, something happened the other day that's interesting. This budget—I said, we'll try to—we'll cut the budget in half, the deficit in half by 2009. We're ahead of goal—ahead of that goal. It's amazing what happens when the economy grows. Guess what happens? More tax revenues come into the

Treasury. Progrowth economic policies work. And I need people in Washington, DC, like Bob Corker who understand, one, you set priorities; two, you eliminate programs that might sound good but don't deliver the results; and three, you help people who can't help themselves. And my number-one priority is making sure we have enough money to defend the United States of America against attack again.

I think it's interesting what Bob Corker said. He said, "America must be the world leader in new technology." Our young people need an exceptional education in the sciences in order to compete for the jobs of the future. You see, the real challenge facing this country is, is to make sure we're the economic leader of the world. I'm not interested in being second place. I think it's—I know it's best for the future of this country that we remain the leader.

And how do you do that? Well, first and foremost, you make sure each child gets a good-quality education. And we're on our way. You know, the No Child Left Behind Act will be up for renewal, and we really need people in the United States Congress who understands the wisdom of that act. And here's the wisdom: It says that we must challenge the soft bigotry of low expectations. We cannot tolerate a system that just simply shuffles kids through school. We must set high expectations and measure to make sure our children are learning to read and write and add and subtract early. And if they're not, we'll provide extra money to make sure no child is left behind.

And I understand people say, "Well, we don't like that; we don't like to be measured; we don't want there to be accountability." There must be accountability in the public schools of the United States of America, to make sure the promise of this country is met.

Senator Frist and I have been working on policies to get us less dependent on foreign sources of oil. It's really the challenge of our time. We have got to use technologies to make us less dependent on energy from unstable parts of the world. It's in our economic interests, and it's in our national security interests. And there's some exciting technologies coming along. One of these days you'll be able to drive the first 40 miles in

your car—and it won't look like a golf cart—using a new battery. We'll be using Tennessee crops to power our automobiles.

We must proceed with civilian nuclear power as a source of electricity. We must make sure we promote clean coal technologies. I look forward to having a United States Senator who understands that technology will help us become less dependent on foreign sources of oil.

I've got two other things I want to say; then you'll be liberated. *[Laughter]* One of my most important jobs is to put people on the bench who know the difference between a legislator and a judge. And I thank Senator Bill Frist for his strong leadership in getting two new Supreme Court judges through the United States Senate—Judge Roberts and Judge Alito. There will be more picks to be made. There will be picks throughout all the judiciary. And I need a United States Senator who understands that we need people on the bench who will strictly interpret the Constitution and not use the bench to legislate. And that man is Bob Corker.

And finally, one of the most important initiatives that my administration has pursued is what I call the Faith-based and Community-based Initiative. This initiative recognizes a couple of things: One, the true strength of this country lies in the hearts and souls of the American people. It recognizes there are social entrepreneurs all over America who feed the hungry, provide shelter for the homeless, love those who need love, without one single law emanating out of Washington, DC. I believe Government has an obligation to open its coffers for competitive bidding to faith-based and community-based groups in order to make sure America—America's souls are saved one person at a time.

You know, here is my great buddy, Michael W. Smith. He's an interesting man—he's a good musician, obviously, but he, too, is a social entrepreneur. I remember visiting with Michael's team who helped found what's called Rocket Town. It's an example of what I'm talking about. Rocket Town came into existence because there was a need to provide a place where people could find love. You see, government is not a loving organization. *[Laughter]* Government is about law

and justice. Love comes from the hearts and souls of individuals. And I need a soul like Bob Corker in the United States Senate who understands that many of the social problems we face require something greater than government, require the help of people who hear a higher calling to love their neighbor just like they would like to be loved themselves.

America can change one heart and one soul and one conscience at a time. Government should not fear faith; government ought to welcome the good works of faith-based and community-based organizations to help make this country as strong as it possibly can be.

And so I want to thank you for coming tonight. I'm proud to share the stage with a good man who is leaving the United States Senate. People of this State will be able to say, Bill Frist, job well done. And I'm proud to be serving—sharing this stage with a man who I look forward to serving with, to do what's right for this country. He doesn't need to take a poll; he doesn't need to run a focus group to determine what's right and what we need to do. He'll make you proud. He's the kind of United States Senator you want. It's my honor to endorse and strongly support Bob Corker for the United States Senate.

Thank you all for coming.

NOTE: The President spoke at 5:45 p.m. at the Loews Vanderbilt Hotel. In his remarks, he referred to Elizabeth Corker, wife of senatorial candidate Bob Corker; former President Saddam Hussein and Prime Minister Nuri al-Maliki of Iraq; Gen. John P. Abizaid, USA, combatant commander, U.S. Central Command; and Prime Minister Junichiro Koizumi of Japan.

Remarks on Arrival in Salt Lake City, Utah

August 30, 2006

War on Terror

Thank you all for coming out. I can't thank you enough for this fantastic Utah welcome. I am delighted to be here in Salt Lake City. My only regret is that Laura is not here to see this great crowd. She sends her best; she sends her love.

I want to thank the Governor for being here today. Governor, thank you for coming. I want to thank your two fine United States Senators, Senator Hatch and Bennett for joining us. I thank Congressmen Matheson, Bishop, and Cannon for being here as well. I want to thank you all for coming.

Most of all, I want to thank you all for staying up a little past your bedtime, for some of you, to greet me.

I'm looking forward to talking tomorrow to our veterans. I'm going to tell the veterans how much America appreciates their service to the United States of America. And I'm going to thank our veterans for setting such a great example for incredibly fine men and women who wear the uniform of the United States military today.

These are challenging times. I wish I could report to you that all is well, but there's still an enemy that wants to harm the United States of America because of what we stand for. We learned that lesson earlier this month, when, because of the good work of our friends in Great Britain and some of our own help, we stopped a terrorist plot against the United States. This is the challenge of our time and my most important duty. And the most important duty of our Government is to protect the American people from further attack.

We will stay on the offense and defeat the terrorists abroad so we do not have to face them here at home. And as we do so, we'll remember the power of freedom and liberty to transform regions of hate to regions of compassion. I believe there's an Almighty, and I believe the great gift of the Almighty to every man and woman on the Earth is the desire to live in freedom.

Iraq is the central front in this war on terror. If we leave the streets of Baghdad before the job is done, we will have to face the terrorists in our own cities. We will stay the course. We will help this young Iraqi democracy succeed, and victory in Iraq will be a major ideological triumph in the struggle of the 21st century.

I firmly believe we'll succeed. We'll succeed in spreading liberty. And as we do so, we can say that this generation did our duty and laid the foundation of peace for generations to come.

For those of you with loved ones in the United States military, I thank you from the bottom of my heart. I can't tell you how proud I am to be the Commander in Chief of such a fantastic group of young men and women. And I'll make this pledge to you: Our Government will make sure your loved ones have all the support, all the help, all the training necessary to do their job of defending freedom, defending America, and spreading liberty that will yield the peace we all want.

So I want to thank you all for coming. It warms my heart to see such a huge crowd. May God bless the great State of Utah, and may God bless America. Thank you all very much.

NOTE: The President spoke at 9:04 p.m. at the Utah Air National Guard base at the Salt Lake International Airport. In his remarks, he referred to Gov. Jon M. Huntsman, Jr., of Utah. A tape was not available for verification of the content of these remarks.

Remarks at the American Legion National Convention in Salt Lake City

August 31, 2006

Thank you all very much. Please be seated. Thanks for the warm welcome. It's great to join you here in one of America's most beautiful cities. I appreciate your hospitality. I'm proud to stand before some of our country's finest patriots, our veterans and their families. And I'm pleased to call you my fellow Legionnaires—I suspect I may be the only one here, though, from Post 77, Houston, Texas. That's what I thought. *[Laughter]* If you're from Post 77, behave yourself here in Salt Lake. *[Laughter]*

Laura did remind me the other night, though, that a few of my fellow members—at least I've joined a few of my fellow members in another illustrious organization, the "Over 60 Club." *[Laughter]*

For almost 90 years, Legionnaires have stood proudly "for God and country." From big cities to small towns, the American Legion name brings to mind the best of our Nation—decency, generosity, and character. I thank you for a lifetime of service. I thank you for the positive contributions you make

to our Nation, and I'm proud to join you today.

First, I want to thank Tom Bock, the national commander, for his kind introduction and his strong leadership. I always am pleased to welcome the commander to the Oval Office to discuss common issues, and you've done a fine job leading this organization, Tom. I also want to thank your wife, Elaine, and I particularly want to pay respect to your son, Captain Bock of the United States Army, who's joined us today.

I appreciate being here with Carol Van Kirk, the national president of the American Legion Auxiliary. And I want to thank all the Auxiliary members who are with us here today as well.

I'm proud that the Governor of this great State, Jon Huntsman, and his wife, Mary Kaye, have joined us. Governor, thank you for your time. I'm also proud to be joined by two United States Senators who are strong supporters of the United States military, Senator Orrin Hatch and Senator Bob Bennett.

Members of the congressional delegation from the State of Utah have joined us, Congressman Rob Bishop and Congressman Chris Cannon. Thank you both for coming. Proud you're here. I thank the State Senator John Valentine, who is the president of the Utah State Senate. I appreciate Speaker Greg Curtis. I want to thank all the State and local officials who have joined us here today. Most particularly, I want to thank you all for giving me a chance to come and speak to you. I particularly want to thank all the Gold Star families who have joined us today. May God bless you. May God bless you.

As veterans, all of you stepped forward when America needed you most. From north Africa to Normandy, Iwo Jima to Inchon, from Khe Sanh to Kuwait, your courage and service have made it possible for generations to live in liberty. And we owe you more than just thanks; we owe you the support of the Federal Government. And so in my first 4 years as President, we increased funding for veterans more than the previous administration did in 8 years. Since then, we've increased it even more. My budget for this year provides more than \$80 billion for veterans—

that's a 75-percent increase since I took office. It's the highest level of support for veterans in American history.

For many veterans, health care is a top priority, and it's a top priority of my administration. When Congress passes my 2007 budget, we will have increased the VA health care budget by 69 percent since 2001. We've extended treatment to a million additional veterans, including more than 300,000 men and women returning from Afghanistan and Iraq. We're building new VA facilities in places where veterans are retiring so that more veterans can get top-quality health care closer to their homes.

I appreciate the Legion's strong history of care and compassion for your fellow veterans. Earlier this week, I traveled to Mississippi and Louisiana to mark the first anniversary of Hurricane Katrina. Veterans were hit hard by this storm, and American Legion posts all across the United States responded with vital relief. In an hour of suffering, you showed the good heart of our Nation, and you showed the world that America can always count on Legionnaires.

I also appreciate the Legion's long history of supporting wise legislation in the Nation's Capital. Earlier this year, the Senate voted on a constitutional amendment to ban flag desecration—we came within a single vote of passing it. The administration looks forward to continuing working with the American Legion to make sure we get this important protection in the Constitution of the United States of America.

Your organization supported another good piece of legislation called the Respect for America's Fallen Heroes Act. This bill ensures that families of fallen service members will not have to endure protests during military funerals.

My administration will also continue to work to locate the men and women in uniform whose fate is still undetermined, our prisoners of war and personnel missing in action. We will not forget these brave Americans. We must not rest until we've accounted for every soldier, sailor, airman, coast-guardsmen, and marine. And we will always honor their courage.

At this hour, a new generation of Americans in uniform is showing great courage in

defending our freedom in the first war of the 21st century. I know that Legionnaires are following this war closely, especially those of you with family and friends who wear our uniform. The images that come back from the frontlines are striking and sometimes unsettling. When you see innocent civilians ripped apart by suicide bombs or families buried inside their homes, the world can seem engulfed in purposeless violence. The truth is, there is violence, but those who cause it have a clear purpose. When terrorists murder at the World Trade Center or car bombers strike in Baghdad or hijackers plot to blow up planes over the Atlantic or terrorist militias shoot rockets at Israeli towns, they are all pursuing the same objective—to turn back the advance of freedom and impose a dark vision of tyranny and terror across the world.

The enemies of liberty come from different parts of the world, and they take inspiration from different sources. Some are radicalized followers of the Sunni tradition who swear allegiance to terrorist organizations like Al Qaida. Others are radicalized followers of the Shi'a tradition who join groups like Hizballah and take guidance from state sponsors like Syria and Iran. Still others are "homegrown" terrorists—fanatics who live quietly in free societies they dream to destroy. Despite their differences, these groups form—the outlines of a single movement, a worldwide network of radicals that use terror to kill those who stand in the way of their totalitarian ideology. And the unifying feature of this movement, the link that spans sectarian divisions and local grievances, is the rigid conviction that free societies are a threat to their twisted view of Islam.

The war we fight today is more than a military conflict; it is the decisive ideological struggle of the 21st century. On one side are those who believe in the values of freedom and moderation—the right of all people to speak and worship and live in liberty. And on the other side are those driven by the values of tyranny and extremism—the right of a self-appointed few to impose their fanatical views on all the rest. As veterans, you have seen this kind of enemy before. They're

successors to Fascists, to Nazis, to Communists, and other totalitarians of the 20th century. And history shows what the outcome will be: This war will be difficult; this war will be long; and this war will end in the defeat of the terrorists and totalitarians and a victory for the cause of freedom and liberty.

We're now approaching the fifth anniversary of the day this war reached our shores. As the horror of that morning grows more distant, there is a tendency to believe that the threat is receding and this war is coming to a close. That feeling is natural and comforting—and wrong. As we recently saw, the enemy still wants to attack us. We're in a war we didn't ask for, but it's a war we must wage and a war we will win.

In the coming days, I'll deliver a series of speeches describing the nature of our enemy in the war on terror, the insights we've gained about their aims and ambitions, the successes and setbacks we've experienced, and our strategy to prevail in this long war. Today I'll discuss a critical aspect of this war: the struggle between freedom and terror in the Middle East, including the battle in Iraq, which is the central front in our fight against terrorism.

To understand the struggle unfolding in the Middle East, we need to look at the recent history of the region. For a half-century, America's primary goal in the Middle East was stability. This was understandable at the time; we were fighting the Soviet Union in the cold war, and it was important to support Middle Eastern governments that rejected communism. Yet over the decades, an undercurrent of danger was rising in the Middle East. Much of the region was mired in stagnation and despair. A generation of young people grew up with little hope to improve their lives, and many fell under the sway of radical extremism. The terrorist movement multiplied in strength, and resentment that had simmered for years boiled over into violence across the world.

Extremists in Iran seized American hostages. Hizballah terrorists murdered American troops at the Marine barracks in Beirut and Khobar Towers in Saudi Arabia. Terrorists set off a truck bomb at the World Trade Center. Al Qaida blew up two U.S. Embassies in east Africa and bombed the *USS Cole*.

Then came the nightmare of September the 11th, 2001, when 19 hijackers killed nearly 3,000 men, women, and children.

In the space of a single morning, it became clear that the calm we saw in the Middle East was only a mirage. We realized that years of pursuing stability to promote peace had left us with neither. Instead, the lack of freedom in the Middle East made the region an incubator for terrorist movements.

The status quo in the Middle East before September the 11th was dangerous and unacceptable, so we're pursuing a new strategy. First, we're using every element of national power to confront Al Qaida, those who take inspiration from them, and other terrorists who use similar tactics. We have ended the days of treating terrorism simply as a law enforcement matter. We will stay on the offense. We will fight the terrorists overseas so we do not have to face them here at home.

Second, we have made it clear to all nations: If you harbor terrorists, you are just as guilty as the terrorists. You're an enemy of the United States, and you will be held to account.

And third, we've launched a bold new agenda to defeat the ideology of the enemy by supporting the forces of freedom in the Middle East and beyond. The freedom agenda is based upon our deepest ideals and our vital interests. Americans believe that every person of every religion on every continent has the right to determine his or her own destiny. We believe that freedom is a gift from an Almighty God, beyond any power on Earth to take away. And we also know, by history and by logic, that promoting democracy is the surest way to build security. Democracies don't attack each other or threaten the peace. Governments accountable to the voters focus on building roads and schools, not weapons of mass destruction. Young people who have a say in their future are less likely to search for meaning in extremism. Citizens who can join a peaceful political party are less likely to join a terrorist organization. Dissidents with the freedom to protest around the clock are less likely to blow themselves up during rush hour. And nations that commit to freedom for their people will not support terrorists—they will join us in defeating them.

So America has committed its influence in the world to advancing freedom and democracy as the great alternatives to repression and radicalism. We will take the side of democratic leaders and reformers across the Middle East. We will support the voices of tolerance and moderation in the Muslim world. We stand with the mothers and fathers in every culture who want to see their children grow up in a caring and peaceful world. And by supporting the cause of freedom in a vital region, we'll make our children and our grandchildren more secure.

Over the past 5 years, we've begun to see the results of our actions, and we have seen how our enemies respond to the advance of liberty. In Afghanistan, we saw a vicious tyranny that harbored the terrorists who planned the September the 11th attacks. Within weeks, American forces were in Afghanistan. Along with Afghan allies, we captured or killed hundreds of Al Qaida and Taliban fighters; we closed down their training camps; and we helped the people of Afghanistan replace the Taliban with a democratic government that answers to them.

Our enemies saw the transformation in Afghanistan, and they've responded by trying to roll back all the progress. Al Qaida and the Taliban lost a coveted base in Afghanistan, and they know they will never reclaim it when democracy succeeds. And so they're trying to return to power by attacking Afghanistan's free institutions, and they will fail. Forces from 40 nations, including every member of NATO, are now serving alongside American troops to support the new Afghan Government. The days of the Taliban are over. The future of Afghanistan belongs to the people of Afghanistan, and the future of Afghanistan belongs to freedom.

In Lebanon, we saw a sovereign nation occupied by the Syrian dictatorship. We also saw the courageous people of Lebanon take to the streets to demand their independence. So we worked to enforce a United Nations resolution that required Syria to end its occupation of the country. The Syrians withdrew their armed forces, and the Lebanese people elected a democratic government that began to reclaim their country.

Our enemies saw the transformation in Lebanon and set out to destabilize the young

democracy. Hizballah launched an unprovoked attack on Israel that undermined the democrat Government in Beirut. Yet their brazen action caused the world to unite in support for Lebanon's democracy. Secretary Rice worked with the Security Council to pass Resolution 1701, which will strengthen Lebanese forces as they take control of southern Lebanon—and stop Hizballah from acting as a state within a state.

I appreciate the troops pledged by France and Italy and other allies for this important international deployment. Together we're going to make it clear to the world that foreign forces and terrorists have no place in a free and democratic Lebanon.

This summer's crisis in Lebanon has made it clearer than ever that the world now faces a grave threat from the radical regime in Iran. The Iranian regime arms, funds, and advises Hizballah, which has killed more Americans than any terrorist network except Al Qaida. The Iranian regime interferes in Iraq by sponsoring terrorists and insurgents, empowering unlawful militias, and supplying components for improvised explosive devices. The Iranian regime denies basic human rights to millions of its people. And the Iranian regime is pursuing nuclear weapons in open defiance of its international obligations.

We know the death and suffering that Iran's sponsorship of terrorists has brought, and we can imagine how much worse it would be if Iran were allowed to acquire nuclear weapons. Many nations are working together to solve this problem. The United Nations passed a resolution demanding that Iran suspend its nuclear enrichment activities. Today is the deadline for Iran's leaders to reply to the reasonable proposal the international community has made. If Iran's leaders accept this offer and abandon their nuclear weapons ambitions, they can set their country on a better course. Yet so far the Iranian regime has responded with further defiance and delay. It is time for Iran to make a choice. We've made our choice: We will continue to work closely with our allies to find a diplomatic solution, but there must be consequences for Iran's defiance, and we must not allow Iran to develop a nuclear weapon.

In Iraq, we saw a dictator who harbored terrorists, fired at military planes, paid the families of Palestinian suicide bombers, invaded a neighbor, and pursued and used weapons of mass destruction. The United Nations passed more than a dozen resolutions demanding that Saddam Hussein fully and openly abandon his weapons of mass destruction. We gave him a last chance to comply, and when he refused, we enforced the just demands of the world. And now Saddam Hussein is in prison and on trial. Soon he will have the justice he denied to so many for so long. And with this tyrant gone from power, the United States, Iraq, the Middle East, and the world are better off.

In 3 years since Saddam's fall, the Iraqi people have reclaimed the sovereignty of their country. They cast their ballots in free elections. They drafted and approved a democratic constitution and elected a constitutional democracy at the heart of the Middle East.

Over the same period, Iraq has seen a rise of terrorist and insurgent movements that use brutal and indiscriminate violence to frustrate the desire of the Iraqi people for freedom and peace. Al Qaida terrorists, former elements of Saddam's regime, illegal militias, and unlawful armed groups are all working to undermine Iraq's new democracy. These groups have different long-term ambitions but the same immediate goals. They want to drive America and our coalition out of Iraq and the Middle East so they can stop the advance of freedom and impose their dark vision on the people of the Middle East.

Our enemies in Iraq have employed ruthless tactics to achieve those goals. They've targeted American and coalition troops with ambushes and roadside bombs. They've taken hostage and beheaded civilians on camera. They've blown up Iraqi Army posts and assassinated government leaders. We've adapted to the tactics. And thanks to the skill and professionalism of Iraqi and American forces, many of these enemies have met their end. At every stop along the way, our enemies have failed to break the courage of the Iraqi people; they have failed to stop the rise of Iraqi democracy; and they will fail in breaking the will of the American people.

Now these enemies have launched a new effort. They have embarked on a bloody campaign of sectarian violence which they hope will plunge Iraq into a civil war. The outbreak of sectarian violence was encouraged by the terrorist Zarqawi, Al Qaida's man in Iraq who called for an "all-out war" on Iraqi Shi'a. The Shi'a community resisted the impulse to seek revenge for awhile. But after this February bombing of the Shi'a Golden Dome Mosque in Samarra, extremist groups mobilized and sectarian death squads formed on the streets of Baghdad and other areas. Our Ambassador reports that thousands of Iraqis were murdered in Baghdad last month, and large numbers of them were victims of sectarian violence.

This cruelty and carnage has led some to question whether Iraq has descended into civil war. Our commanders and our diplomats on the ground in Iraq believe that's not the case. They report that only a small number of Iraqis are engaged in sectarian violence, while the overwhelming majority want peace and a normal life in a unified country. Iraqi leaders from all backgrounds remember the elections that brought them to power, in which 12 million Iraqis defied the car bombers and killers to proclaim, "We want to be free."

Iraq's Government is working tirelessly to hold the nation together and to heal Iraq's divisions, not to exploit them. The Iraqi people have come a long way. They are not going to let their country fall apart or relapse into tyranny. As Prime Minister Maliki told the United States Congress, "Iraqis have tasted freedom, and we will defend it absolutely."

America has a clear strategy to help the Iraqi people protect their new freedom and build a democracy that can govern itself and sustain itself and defend itself. On the political side, we're working closely with Prime Minister Maliki to strengthen Iraq's unity Government and develop—and to deliver better services to the Iraqi people. This is a crucial moment for the new Iraqi Government; its leaders understand the challenge. They believe that now is the time to hammer out compromises on Iraq's most contentious issues.

I've been clear with each Iraqi leader I meet: America is a patient nation, and Iraq

can count on our partnership as long as the new Government continues to make the hard decisions necessary to advance a unified, democratic, and peaceful Iraq. Prime Minister Maliki has shown courage in laying out an agenda to do just that, and he can count on an ally, the United States of America, to help him promote this agenda.

On the security side, we're refining our tactics to meet the threats on the ground. I've given our commanders in Iraq all the flexibility they need to make adjustments necessary to stay on the offense and defeat the enemies of freedom. We've deployed Special Operation forces to kill or capture terrorists operating in Iraq. Zargawi found out what they can do. We continue to train Iraqi police forces to defend their own nation. We've handed over security responsibility for a southern province to Iraqi forces. Five of Iraq's 10 Army divisions are now taking the lead in their areas of operation. The Iraqi security forces are determined. They're becoming more capable, and together, we will defeat the enemies of a free Iraq.

Recently, we also launched a major new campaign to end the security crisis in Baghdad. Side by side, Iraqi and American forces are conducting operations in the city's most violent areas to disrupt Al Qaida, to capture enemy fighters, crack down on IED makers, and break up the death squads. These forces are helping Iraq's national police force undergo retraining to better enforce law in Baghdad. And these forces are supporting the Iraqi Government as it provides reconstruction assistance.

The Baghdad Security Plan is still in its early stages. We cannot expect immediate success. Yet the initial results are encouraging. According to one military report, a Sunni man in a diverse Baghdad neighborhood said this about the Shi'a soldiers on patrol: "Their image has changed. Now you feel they're there to protect you." Over the coming weeks and months, the operation will expand throughout Baghdad until Iraq's democratic Government is in full control of its capital. The work is difficult and dangerous, but the Iraqi Government and their forces are determined to reclaim their country. And the United States is determined to help them succeed.

Here at home, we have a choice to make about Iraq. Some politicians look at our efforts in Iraq and see a diversion from the war on terror. That would come as news to Usama bin Laden, who proclaimed that the "third world war is raging" in Iraq. It would come as news to the number two man of Al Qaida, Zawahiri, who has called the struggle in Iraq, quote, "The place for the greatest battle." It would come as news to the terrorists from Syria, Saudi Arabia, Egypt, Sudan, Libya, and Yemen and other countries, who have come to Iraq to fight the rise of democracy.

It's hard to believe that these terrorists would make long journeys across dangerous borders, endure heavy fighting, or blow themselves up in the streets of Baghdad for a so-called diversion. Some Americans didn't support my decision to remove Saddam Hussein; many are frustrated with the level of violence. But we should all agree that the battle for Iraq is now central to the ideological struggle of the 21st century. We will not allow the terrorists to dictate the future of this century—so we will defeat them in Iraq.

Still, there are some in our country who insist that the best option in Iraq is to pull out, regardless of the situation on the ground. Many of these folks are sincere and they're patriotic, but they could be—they could not be more wrong. If America were to pull out before Iraq can defend itself, the consequences would be absolutely predictable and absolutely disastrous. We would be handing Iraq over to our worst enemies—Saddam's former henchmen, armed groups with ties to Iran, and Al Qaida terrorists from all over the world who would suddenly have a base of operations far more valuable than Afghanistan under the Taliban. They would have a new sanctuary to recruit and train terrorists at the heart of the Middle East, with huge oil riches to fund their ambitions. And we know exactly where those ambitions lead. If we give up the fight in the streets of Baghdad, we will face the terrorists in the streets of our own cities.

We can decide to stop fighting the terrorists in Iraq and other parts of the world, but they will not decide to stop fighting us. General John Abizaid, our top commander in the Middle East region, recently put it this way:

"If we leave, they will follow us." And he is right. The security of the civilized world depends on victory in the war on terror, and that depends on victory in Iraq. So the United States of America will not leave until victory is achieved.

Victory in Iraq will be difficult, and it will require more sacrifice. The fighting there can be as fierce as it was at Omaha Beach or Guadalcanal. And victory is as important as it was in those earlier battles. Victory in Iraq will result in a democracy that is a friend of America and an ally in the war on terror. Victory in Iraq will be a crushing defeat to our enemies who have staked so much on the battle there. Victory in Iraq will honor the sacrifice of the brave Americans who have given their lives. And victory in Iraq would be a powerful triumph in the ideological struggle of the 21st century. From Damascus to Tehran, people will look to a democratic Iraq as inspiration that freedom can succeed in the Middle East and as evidence that the side of freedom is the winning side. This is a pivotal moment for the Middle East. The world is watching. And in Iraq and beyond, the forces of freedom will prevail.

For all the debate, American policy in the Middle East comes down to a straightforward choice. We can allow the Middle East to continue on its course—on the course it was headed before September the 11th, and a generation from now, our children will face a region dominated by terrorist states and radical dictators armed with nuclear weapons. Or we can stop that from happening by rallying the world to confront the ideology of hate, and give the people of the Middle East a future of hope. And that is the choice America has made.

We see a day when people across the Middle East have governments that honor their dignity, unleash their creativity, and count their votes. We see a day when leaders across the Middle East reject terror and protect freedom. We see a day when the nations of the Middle East are allies in the cause of peace. The path to that day will be uphill and uneven, but we can be confident of the outcome because we know that the direction of history leads toward freedom.

In the early years of our Republic, Thomas Jefferson said that we cannot expect to move

"from despotism to liberty in a featherbed." That's been true in every time and place. No one understands that like you, our veterans, understand that. With the distance of history, it can be easy to look back at the wars of the 20th century and see a straight path to victory. You know better than that. You waged the hard battles; you suffered the wounds; you lost friends and brothers. You were there for dark times and the moments of uncertainty, and you know that freedom is always worth the sacrifice.

You also know what it takes to win. For all that is new about this war, one thing has not changed: Victory still depends on the courage and the patience and the resolve of the American people. Above all, it depends on patriots who are willing to fight for freedom. Our Nation is blessed to have these men and women in abundance. Our military forces make this Nation strong; they make this Nation safe; and they make this Nation proud.

We thank them and their families for their sacrifice. We will remember all those who have given their lives in this struggle. And I vow that we will give our men and women in uniform all the resources they need to accomplish their missions.

One brave American we remember is Marine Corporal Adam Galvez from here in Salt Lake City. Yesterday Adam's mom and dad laid their son to rest. We're honored by their presence with us today. About a month ago, Adam was wounded by a suicide bomb in Iraq's Anbar Province. When he regained consciousness, he found he was buried alive, so he dug himself out of the rubble. And then he ran through gunfire to get a shovel to dig out his fellow marines. As soon as he recovered from his injuries, Adam volunteered to go back to the frontlines. And 11 days ago, he was killed when a roadside bomb hit his convoy.

Here is what Adam's mom and dad said about the cause for which their son gave his life: "Though many are debating the justification of this war, Adam believed in his country—Adam's belief in his country did not waver, even to the point of the ultimate sacrifice. It's our hope and our prayer that people share the same conviction and dedication to our troops and fellow Americans."

Our Nation will always remember the selflessness and sacrifice of Americans like Adam Galvez. We will honor their lives by completing the good and noble work they have started. And we can be confident that one day, veterans of the war on terror will gather at American Legion halls across the country and say the same things you say: "We made our Nation safer; we made a region more peaceful; and we left behind a better world for our children and our grandchildren."

Thanks for having me. May God bless our veterans. May God bless our troops. And may God continue to bless the United States of America.

NOTE: The President spoke at 9:08 a.m. at the Salt Palace Convention Center. In his remarks, he referred to U.S. Ambassador to Iraq Zalmay Khalilzad; Prime Minister Nuri al-Maliki of Iraq; Usama bin Laden, leader of the Al Qaida terrorist organization; Ayman Al-Zawahiri, founder of the Egyptian Islamic Jihad and senior Al Qaida associate; and Gen. John P. Abizaid, USA, combatant commander, U.S. Central Command.

Remarks at a Reception for Senatorial Candidate Orrin Hatch in Salt Lake City

August 31, 2006

Thank you all very much. Thank you all. Please be seated. Thanks for the warm welcome. It's great to be here in Utah. Gosh, I landed at the airport last night—a couple of thousand people out there to say hello. I just had the honor of speaking to the American Legion; then come to a hall filled with great citizens concerned about the reelection of Orrin Hatch. I'm telling—here to tell you, this guy is doing a great job and you need to send him back to the United States Senate.

I'm proud to call him friend. And he's an effective person in Washington. I don't know if you can tell it this far away from Washington, but he's effective. He gets things done. People like to hear him; they listen to him; they trust him; they trust his judgment. And so do I. And every time I'm around Orrin Hatch, after he gets through talking about Utah, he finally gets to the country. [Laughter] In other words, he loves Utah, and he loves the citizens of Utah.

And he married well. We're proud to be here with Elaine and the Hatch family. Laura said to me, she said, "You get over to Utah, and you help our friends come back to Washington, DC." She sends her love. I married well, just like Orrin married well. It helps to have somebody you love stand by your side when you're in politics. There's nothing better than having a person that you care deeply about and—to share the experience. And that's the way the Hatches have been, and they've served a great example for a lot of younger political families. And thank you for having the right priorities, faith and your family and your friends.

And so I've come to say as best as I can and in as plain English as I can possibly speak—which sometimes gets a little distorted—[laughter]—please send Orrin Hatch back to the United States Senate.

I want to thank the Governor and Mary Kaye for joining us. I appreciate you all taking time to come to support the senior Senator from the State of Utah. It's smart politics. [Laughter] You're doing a fine job, and the people of Utah are proud of you.

I want to thank the other Senator, Senator Bob Bennett, for his courageous leadership and friendship. I want to thank Congressman Rob Bishop and Congressman Chris Cannon for joining us today and for serving the country. Glad you all are here. Cannon's brother is the chairman of the Republican Party. I like to remind the chairman that he's the cuter Cannon. [Laughter] Is that okay? No. [Laughter]

I want to thank all the statehouse folks who've joined us today too. I appreciate John Valentine who is the senate president—leader, and Greg Curtis, the speaker. I want to thank all of you who are senators and representatives. I appreciate you serving your communities. I had—some of the greatest experiences I've ever had in politics—was working with our State senate and our house of representatives in the State of Texas. And I hope, Governor, you're having as much fun working with them as I had. And if not, just keep telling them what to do, and eventually they'll get the message. [Laughter] But thank you all for serving.

I appreciate all the local folks here. I particularly want to say thanks to former Senator

Jake Garn, who is with us. Senator, good to see you. I appreciate you coming. And I see my friend Jim Hansen is with us today. Congressman, good to see you, thanks for being here. And I wish LaVar Christensen all the best in his run for the congressional seat here in Utah. Good luck to you. Appreciate you.

And most of all, thanks for helping Orrin. It takes a lot of work to get this many people in the room. And for those of you who organized this event, thank you. I know how hard you worked, and so does he. This is an incredibly successful fundraiser, and he deserves it.

And for those of you involved in grassroots politics, thanks a lot for your hard work. Thanks for making sure that Utah was solid in 2004, and thank you for making sure that Utah remains solid in 2006. I appreciate you putting up the signs. I appreciate you making the phone calls. I appreciate you knocking on the doors.

A lot of times, people kind of forget the efforts you make, but I don't, and I know Orrin doesn't. I know the Governor appreciates all the grassroots activists. So thanks for the good work you're doing here in the great State of Utah.

These are historic times in which we're living. This generation of ours is being challenged, and it's a tough challenge because we're facing an enemy that knows no bounds of decency, an enemy that uses tactics that are beyond our imagination to achieve certain objectives. The President has to make a lot of decisions. Mine is a decisionmaking experience. And I just want you to know that a lot of the decisions I have made were based upon the experiences of the attacks on September the 11th. See, I vowed that day that I would never forget our most important duty in Washington, DC, is to protect the American people.

And Orrin Hatch understands that. He is a strong supporter of our strategy to defend the country. That strategy starts with understanding this doctrine: One, you can't rationalize with these people; you cannot negotiate with these extremists, these terrorists, these people who are bound together by an ideology that is hateful. The only way to protect the American people is to stay on the offense

and defeat them overseas so we do not have to face them here at home.

But it's important to understand the nature of this war. This is more than just a military conflict. This is the decisive ideological struggle of the 21st century. Some would like to assign this war to something as simple as law enforcement. That shows a lack of understanding of the nature of the enemy. Law enforcement means we wouldn't use all assets at our disposal to protect the American people. This is an ideological struggle, and it's the struggle of the century. And it's the struggle in which we must prevail for the sake of our children and our grandchildren.

On the one side of this struggle are those who believe in freedom and moderation, the right of people to speak, the right of people to worship freely—one of the great privileges in America, isn't it? I'm proud as the President to be able to say you're equally American if you're Jew, Muslim, Christian, agnostic, atheist—we're all equally American. And one of the great treasured rights of our society is for people to be able to worship freely.

On this struggle are those who believe in the universality of liberty. I personally believe there's an Almighty, and I believe that one of the great gifts of that Almighty to every man, woman, and child on the face of the Earth is the desire to live in freedom.

And on the other side of this ideological struggle are those who are driven by tyranny and extremism, the right of a self-appointed few to impose their fanatical views over the rest of us. And that's the struggle. And it's important that our fellow citizens understand that struggle.

We didn't ask for this war, but we will answer history's call with confidence. And it's important to have Members of the United States Senate who understand the call of history and are willing to stand strong in the face of an enemy who is relenting. That's the challenge of the 21st century.

As I told you, we'll stay on the offense. As well, I made it clear that if you harbor a terrorist, you're just as guilty as the terrorists, and you're an enemy of the United States, and you will be held to account. In other words, this is a war in which nation-states aren't necessarily in the league, as previous wars, in, but they provide safe haven

for. It's important when the President speaks, he means what he says. I spoke clearly to the world that if you harbor a terrorist, you're equally as guilty as the terrorists. The Taliban didn't take our word seriously. And thanks to a fantastic United States military, along with allies, we removed the Taliban. We upheld doctrine; we freed 25 million Afghan citizens; and the world is better off.

A lesson of September the 11th is that when this Nation sees a threat, we must take it seriously, before it fully materializes. If there is a threat, we must recognize that threat and deal with it before it comes home to hurt us. You know, the tendency in any difficult situation is for some to want to forget the lessons, put the past behind and think about a more comforting future. And I can understand that. As a matter of fact, part of my job is to assure the American people that we understand the threat and that people should go on about their lives. Let us worry about it. That's why I've asked to make sure we have all the tools necessary to protect the American people—tools like the PATRIOT Act, which Orrin helped get passed. Tools like the capacity to listen to an Al Qaida phone call. If they're calling into the United States, we want to know why so we can protect the American people.

I saw a threat in Iraq. As a matter of fact, members of both political parties in the United States Congress saw the same threat. Nations around the world saw the threat. And the threat was a tyrant who brutally murdered thousands of his own citizens; a tyrant who had invaded his neighbors; a tyrant who had used weapons of mass destruction on his people; a tyrant who previous administrations had declared a state sponsor of terror; a tyrant who, when the world spoke through the United Nations, ignored the world. I think when the world speaks, it must mean what it says. And so we gave the tyrant one last chance to disclose and disarm, or face serious consequences. It was his choice to make. The world is safer, the Iraqi people are better, the cause for liberty is more advanced because Saddam Hussein is no longer in power.

Iraq is the central front in the war on terror. Usama bin Laden has made that clear. Zawahiri has made that clear—he's the number-two man in Al Qaida. Their mission is

to drive us out of Iraq in order to achieve safe haven, safe haven from which to launch further attacks against moderate elements in the Middle East, safe haven from which to plan and plot attacks against the United States of America. They're not going to succeed.

There are powerful forces inside Iraq that to me—causes me to be optimistic, starting with the Iraqi people themselves. You know, last December seems like an eternity, particularly to those of us in political office. But that's not too long in the march of history, is it? Last December, 12 million Iraqis, in defiance of terrorists and killers and suicide bombers, said loud and clear, "We want to be free. We want a government of, by, and for the people."

And since then, under a constitution that is one of the most modern constitutions ever in the Middle East, a unity government has formed; a government desirous of responding to the people; a government working hard to reject the extremists who want to stop the advance of democracy and freedom. This is a tough war. It's a tough war because the enemy will use any tactic to cause the Iraqis to split apart or any tactic trying to drive the United States out of the Middle East. We must persevere. We must continue to work with this democratically elected Government of Iraq. We must continue to give their army the skills necessary to fight. And we must stay on the hunt for terrorist elements, which we are doing. We'll succeed in Iraq, and when we do, this country will be more secure.

I understand there's a debate, and, of course, there should be a debate. I mean, I welcome debates in our society. One of the great things about America is, people can go into the public square and express themselves openly without fear of the state. That's what we welcome. In these 2006 campaigns, there will be a lot of debate. There will be people—good people, decent people, patriotic people—who say, "Now is the time to leave Iraq," and they are wrong.

If we leave before Iraq can defend itself and govern itself and sustain itself, this will be a key defeat for the United States of America in this ideological struggle of the 21st century. If we leave before this young

democracy has its roots firmly in place, so that an example of liberty flourishes in a region that's so desperate for something other than a society that's caused resentment and hopelessness—if we leave, it will embolden the enemy. The enemy has said this is the front in the war on terror. That's what they have proclaimed. They'll become even more bold. If we leave before the job is done, we'll help create a terrorist state in the heart of the Middle East that will have control of huge oil reserves. If we leave before the job is done, this country will have no credibility. People will look at our words as empty words. People will not trust the judgment and the leadership of the United States. Reformers will shrink from their deep desire to live in a free society. Moderates will wonder if their voice will ever be heard again. If we leave before the job will be done, those who sacrificed, those brave volunteers who sacrificed in our United States military will have died in vain. And as General Abizaid has said, if we leave before the job is done—if we leave the streets of Baghdad, the enemy will follow us to our own streets in America.

The stakes are high. I believe the only way we can lose is if we leave before the job is done. That's what I believe. I'm making my decisions based upon the recommendations of commanders on the ground. I want to assure you, polls and focus groups will not decide the Iraq policy in the global war on terror. And when we win and when we achieve our stated objective, it will be a major defeat for the terrorists in this global war on terror. It will strengthen the spread of democracy in the Middle East. Imagine what the example of a democratic Iraq, a country that has adopted a democracy based upon its history and its traditions, imagine the signal it will send to those reformers in Iran or those hopeful Palestinians that say, "Someday, we want a state to live in peace with our neighbor Israel." When we succeed in Iraq, we'll have created a valuable ally in the global war on terror.

I don't know if you remember this, but recently I had the honor of and privilege of taking my friend the Prime Minister of Japan to Graceland—Elvis's place. [*Laughter*] I've never been to Graceland. I thought it would be fun to go, but more importantly, he want-

ed to go. See, he was an Elvis buff. [*Laughter*] I also thought it would send an interesting message that I hope helps explain the stakes of this ideological struggle we're in. Can you imagine somebody after World War II saying, "I predict one day an American President will be going to a singer's home with the Prime Minister of Japan?" They'd have thought the guy was off his rocker. Isn't it interesting that a son of a Navy torpedo fighter who fought the Japanese with all his soul and all his might, like many of your relatives did, flew down on Air Force One with the Prime Minister of the former enemy? I think it is. And I think it's an historical lesson that we all can learn something about.

And by the way, when we were on the plane, guess what we talked about—how we can work together to keep the peace. We talked about North Korea. We talked about what it meant for Japan to send 1,000 troops into Iraq to help this young democracy fight off the ideologues of hate. We talked about our HIV/AIDS initiative in Africa. We talked about building roads in Afghanistan. I found it incredibly interesting that I was able to sit down with the Prime Minister of a former enemy and talk about the peace. Something happened between 41's time in the U.S. Navy and 43's time talking with the Prime Minister of Japan. Japan adopted a Japanese-style democracy.

Liberty has the capacity to transform enemies into allies. One of these days, American Presidents will be sitting down with duly elected leaders of the Middle East, and they will be talking about keeping the peace. And this generation will be able to say, the world was safer for our children and grandchildren.

And this Senator understands the stakes, and I'm proud to serve with him. Both of us are honored to be able to say, we're laying the foundation of peace for generations to come.

He also understands this, that the more money you have in your pocket, the more you're going to save, invest, and spend, and the better our economy does. The classic debate in Washington, DC, really centers around this: Who best to spend your money, you or the Government? Senator Hatch and I believe you can spend it better than the

Government, and therefore, we strongly believe—[*applause*]. And that's why, when things got tough, economically tough, we cut the taxes on everybody who paid taxes. And it worked. This economy of ours is strong. Progrowth economic policies work. And the way to make sure this economy remains strong is to make the tax relief we passed a permanent part of the Tax Code.

The unemployment rate is 4.8 percent. Since August of 2005, we've created more than 5.5 million new jobs. Productivity is high. The economy has grown now for 35 straight months. It has added jobs for 35 straight—your unemployment rate, Governor, congratulations, is 3.4 percent. People are working. Productivity is high. That's good—we're a productive society. We're constantly trying to improve. Entrepreneurship is strong. Minorities are owning businesses. Homeownership has been high. I mean, this is a productive period of time for the American people. It's because our philosophy works—cutting taxes, trusting people with their own money makes sense.

And you know what else happens? It increases revenues for the Treasury. You know, there's been a lot of talk about the deficits, and there should be. We're concerned about the deficit. As a matter of fact, I said to the Congress, join us in being fiscally responsible about how we spend the people's money, and we can cut that deficit. The deficit is going to be cut in half, not by 2009 but by 2008, because progrowth economic policies work. The best way—and by the way, in Washington, you'll hear them say, "Well, in order to balance the budget, we need to raise more revenues." But that's not the way it works in Washington. Yeah, they'll raise revenues; they'll increase your taxes; but they will figure out new ways to spend your money. The best way to balance the budget is to keep taxes low and be fiscally responsible with the taxpayers' money. And that's what we're doing.

Orrin said, "Keep it short." I obviously didn't listen very carefully. I want to work with him to make sure this country becomes less dependent on foreign sources of oil. It's in our economic interests that we become less dependent on foreign sources of oil, and it is in our national security interests. And

so therefore, we will continue to spend money wisely on new technologies.

We're big believers in the nuclear power industry's capacity to make sure that we protect the environment with renewable sources of energy. I see automobiles being driven by batteries that can drive the first 40 miles on electricity. I know we got clean coal technologies that will eventually work. It's the calling of our time to make sure that we do smart things with your money to enable us to diversify away from oil from countries, particularly those countries that don't like us. I look forward to working with Orrin to make sure that we remain competitive by spending money, wisely spending money on research and development both at the Federal level and at the private level, which is why we need to make permanent the research and development tax credit.

I look forward to working with Orrin and other Members of the United States Senate to once and for all do something about junk lawsuits, particularly those that are running good doctors out of practice. People worry about the cost of health care. One way to deal with the cost of health care is to get rid of these junk lawsuits.

It's one thing, if you got a problem, to have your day in court. But these junk lawsuits—you see, when I first got to Washington, I said, "Well, the States can figure it out." Governor, you know, you all write your own laws. And then I realized the defensive practice of medicine costs you, the taxpayers, about \$28 billion a year. Docs and providers providing unnecessary services in order to defend themselves against junk lawsuits cost the Federal Government—because of Medicaid, Medicare, and veterans health benefits—about 28 billion. I came to the conclusion, therefore, this is a Federal problem that requires a Federal solution.

Congress passed—the House passed a good piece of legislation. I'm going to continue to work with Senators Hatch and Bennett to get good legislation out of the United States Senate to make sure health care is available and affordable for folks all across the United States of America.

And speaking about health care, you did a fine job of training my Secretary for Health and Human Services—Leavitt. He's doing a

great job. He really is. And he said he's down there—somebody said he was fishing with him recently. So when you see him again, tell him to get back to work. *[Laughter]*

Finally, I want to say something about the judiciary. I've had no stronger ally than Orrin Hatch in making sure that we appoint judges who know the difference between being a judge and a legislator. One of my most important responsibilities is to make sure we have people on the Federal bench who strictly interpret the Constitution and not use the bench from which to legislate. And I had the honor of naming two members of the Supreme Court—and I took my time, and I looked at a lot of good folks, and I came up with some fine names. And thanks to the support and leadership of Senator Orrin Hatch, Chief Justice John Roberts and Justice Sam Alito now sit on the bench, and the United States is better off for it.

He just told me, if I didn't end, he's going to make me listen to one of his songs. *[Laughter]* Actually, the man has got some talent. *[Laughter]* And he's a great songwriter but not as good a Senator—as he is a Senator. And that's saying a lot. You've got a fine man in the United States Senate in Orrin Hatch. He's decent; he's honorable; he gets the job done. I thank you for supporting him. Send him back to Washington, and Utah and America will benefit—continue to benefit from his service.

I thank you for the warm welcome here. It's been such a joy to come back to your beautiful State. May God bless you all.

NOTE: The President spoke at 11 a.m. at the Grand America Hotel. In his remarks, he referred to Gov. Jon M. Huntsman, Jr., of Utah, and his wife, Mary Kaye; Joseph A. Cannon, chairman, Utah Republican Party; LaVar Christensen, candidate for Congress in Utah's Second Congressional District; former President Saddam Hussein of Iraq; Usama bin Laden, leader of the Al Qaida terrorist organization; Ayman Al-Zawahiri, founder of the Egyptian Islamic Jihad and senior Al Qaida associate; Gen. John P. Abizaid, USA, combatant commander, U.S. Central Command; and Prime Minister Junichiro Koizumi of Japan.

Message on the Observance of Labor Day

September 1, 2006

I send greetings to those celebrating Labor Day 2006.

America is the most innovative Nation in the world because our free enterprise system unleashes the talent and creativity of our people. American workers are vital to our Nation's economic prosperity, and they help us confront the competitive challenges of the global marketplace.

My Administration remains committed to fostering an environment where innovation succeeds and opportunity thrives. Since August 2003, our economy has created more than 5.7 million jobs, and manufacturing production has risen 5.6 percent in the last year. Our economic expansion is lifting the lives of millions of our citizens, and we will continue to work toward developing sound economic policies that keep our economy moving forward and create more jobs for American workers.

Each year on Labor Day, we recognize the dedicated men and women of our Nation's workforce. By working hard each day, these highly-skilled individuals build better lives for themselves and their families and make America stronger.

Laura and I send our best wishes on this special occasion.

George W. Bush

NOTE: An original was not available for verification of the content of this message.

Digest of Other White House Announcements

The following list includes the President's public schedule and other items of general interest announced by the Office of the Press Secretary and not included elsewhere in this issue.

August 26

In the morning, at the Bush family home in Kennebunkport, ME, the President had an intelligence briefing.

August 27

In the afternoon, the President and Mrs. Bush returned to Washington, DC.

August 28

In the morning, the President had an intelligence briefing followed by a briefing on Hurricane Ernesto. He and Mrs. Bush then traveled to Biloxi, MS. While en route aboard Air Force One, they participated in an interview with April Ryan of American Urban Radio Network. Upon arrival at Kessler Air Force Base in Biloxi, he met with U.S. military personnel.

Later in the morning, the President and Mrs. Bush participated in a walking tour of a neighborhood damaged by Hurricane Katrina in 2005.

In the afternoon, the President and Mrs. Bush traveled to Gulfport, MS, where, upon arrival, he met with USA Freedom Corps volunteer Ken Wetzel. Later, they traveled to New Orleans, LA, where they had dinner with State and local officials.

August 29

In the morning, the President had an intelligence briefing. Later, at Betsy's Pancake House, he had breakfast with Mayor C. Ray Nagin of New Orleans. Then, at the Windsor Court Hotel, he and Mrs. Bush participated in an interview with Garland Robinette of WWL Radio of New Orleans.

Later in the morning, at the St. Louis Cathedral, the President and Mrs. Bush attended a service commemorating the first anniversary of Hurricane Katrina.

In the afternoon, the President and Mrs. Bush toured the Musicians' Village housing development and hosted a lunch for Habitat for Humanity volunteers. He also presented a National Medal of the Arts to entertainer Antoine "Fats" Domino as a replacement for the original medal which was lost during Hurricane Katrina.

Later in the afternoon, the President and Mrs. Bush participated in an interview with Brian Williams of NBC News. Later, at the

Louis Armstrong New Orleans International Airport, he and Mrs. Bush participated in a photo opportunity with the New Orleans Saints professional football team. He then traveled to the Bush Ranch in Crawford, TX.

The President announced his intention to nominate Robert T. Howard to be Assistant Secretary of Veterans Affairs (Information and Technology).

The President announced his intention to nominate Collister Johnson, Jr., to be Administrator of the Saint Lawrence Seaway Development Corporation.

The President announced his intention to nominate Sara Martinez Tucker to be Under Secretary of Education.

The President announced his intention to nominate Peter E. Cianchette to be a member of the Internal Revenue Service Oversight Board.

The President announced his intention to designate Naomi Churchill Earp as Chairman of the Equal Employment Opportunity Commission.

The President announced his intention to designate James R. Kunder as Acting Deputy Administrator of the U.S. Agency for International Development.

August 30

In the morning, the President had an intelligence briefing. Later, he traveled to Little Rock, AR, where, upon arrival, he met with USA Freedom Corps volunteer Joy Cameron.

In the afternoon, at a private residence, the President attended a luncheon for gubernatorial candidate Asa Hutchinson. Later, he traveled to Nashville, TN, where, upon arrival, he met with USA Freedom Corps volunteer Patricia Gray.

In the evening, the President traveled to Salt Lake City, UT, where, upon arrival, he met with USA Freedom Corps volunteer Sam Delis.

The White House announced that the President will welcome Amir Sabah al-Ahmad al-Jabir al-Sabah of Kuwait to the White House on September 5.

The President announced his intention to nominate Terrence W. Boyle and William

James Haynes II to be U.S. Circuit judges for the Fourth Circuit.

The President announced his intention to nominate William Gerry Myers III and Norman Randy Smith to be U.S. Circuit judges for the Ninth Circuit.

The President announced his intention to nominate Michael Brunson Wallace to be a U.S. Circuit judge for the Fifth Circuit.

The President declared a major disaster in New Mexico and ordered Federal aid to supplement State and local recovery efforts in the area struck by severe storms and flooding on July 26 and continuing.

August 31

In the morning, the President had an intelligence briefing. Later, he met with leaders of the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-Day Saints (LDS) at their Administration Building.

In the afternoon, the President traveled to Camp David, MD.

The President announced his intention to recess appoint Paul DeCamp as Administrator of the Wage and Hour Division at the Department of Labor.

The President announced his intention to recess appoint Michael F. Duffy as a member of the Federal Mine Safety and Health Review Commission.

The President announced his intention to recess appoint Daniel Meron as General Counsel of the Department of Health and Human Services.

The President announced his intention to designate Michael J. Sullivan as Acting Director of the Bureau of Alcohol, Tobacco, Firearms, and Explosives.

September 1

In the morning, the President had an intelligence briefing.

The President announced that he has named Marc Thiessen as Deputy Assistant to the President and Deputy Director of Speechwriting.

The President announced that he has named Martha Miller as Special Assistant to the President for Presidential Personnel.

The President announced that he has named David Trulio as Special Assistant to the President and Executive Secretary of the Homeland Security Council.

The President announced that he has named Dennis C. Wilder as Special Assistant to the President and Senior Director for East Asian Affairs of the National Security Council.

Nominations Submitted to the Senate

NOTE: No nominations were submitted to the Senate during the period covered by this issue.

Checklist of White House Press Releases

The following list contains releases of the Office of the Press Secretary that are neither printed as items nor covered by entries in the Digest of Other White House Announcements.

Released August 28

Transcript of a press gaggle by Deputy Press Secretary Dana Perino

Fact sheet: President Bush's Visit to Biloxi and New Orleans

Fact sheet: A New Mississippi: Rebuilding in the Wake of Hurricane Katrina

Released August 29

Transcript of a press gaggle by Deputy Press Secretary Dana Perino

Transcript of a press briefing by Gulf Coast Region Recovery and Rebuilding Coordinator Donald E. Powell and U.S. Coast Guard Commandant Adm. Thad W. Allen

Fact sheet: Keeping the Promise of Jackson Square: A More Hopeful Louisiana

Released August 30

Transcript of a press gaggle by Deputy Press Secretary Dana Perino

Statement by the Deputy Press Secretary on the death of Egypt's Nobel Prize Laureate in Literature, Naguib Mahfouz

Statement by the Deputy Press Secretary:
Visit by Amir Sabah of Kuwait to Washington

Statement by the Deputy Press Secretary on
disaster assistance to New Mexico

Released September 1

Fact sheet: Job Creation Continues—More
Than 5.7 Million Jobs Created Since August
2003

Released August 31

Transcript of a press gaggle by Deputy Press
Secretary Dana Perino

Fact sheet: Winning the Struggle Between
Freedom and Terror in the Middle East

**Acts Approved
by the President**

NOTE: No acts approved by the President were
received by the Office of the Federal Register
during the period covered by this issue.